

U.N. rejects freeze on Bosnia charges

THE HAGUE (R) — The chief prosecutor for the U.N. criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia said on Monday he had rejected a Russian request to freeze genocide charges against two prominent Bosnian Serb leaders. Richard Goldstone told reporters in the Hague that the Russian ambassador to the Netherlands had asked the tribunal on Sunday whether it would freeze its proceedings against Radovan Karadzic and Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic. Mr. Goldstone said he had no hesitation in turning down the request because the Russians had given no reasons for making it. "I could conceive of absolutely no reasons to justify either bringing such an application or asking a trial chamber to consider it. I found it a most unusual request and it was put in a most unusual way. Absolutely no reasons were given by the ambassador. I don't know what was behind it," he said. Asked to speculate on why the Russians made the request, Mr. Goldstone said it could have been connected with the French ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs for information on the fate of two French air force pilots shot down three months ago.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

Clashes on Saudi-Yemen border reported

ADEN (R) — Saudi Arabian and Yemeni forces clashed along their disputed border last week despite an accord to settle the long-standing dispute, Yemeni sources close to the government said on Monday. Several people, including soldiers from both sides, were wounded in the clashes in Al Kharakhr, along the border between Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Oman, the sources said. Parts of the long Yemen-Saudi border have oil and gas deposits. Western oil industry experts say Saudi Arabia and Yemen reached a border accord last February following three months of military clashes and exchanges of insults and accusations. This was followed by several rounds of talks between joint economic, political and demarcation committees to resolve the issue and normalise ties. Links between the two neighbours have been tense since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait when Yemen, then a member of the U.N. Security Council, voted against sanctioning the Gulf war.

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Syrian vice-president to visit Paris

PARIS (AFP) — Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam will make a four-day official visit to Paris next week, during which he will meet President Jacques Chirac, officials said Monday. Mr. Khaddam will stay here from Dec. 18-22, in the first such high-level visit for several years. Foreign Minister Herve de Charette recently announced plans to visit Damascus to strengthen bilateral relations.

Turkey expels 50 Islamists from army

ANKARA (AFP) — Fifty pro-Islamic officers and non-commissioned officers have been expelled from Turkey's armed forces for "lack of discipline," the Supreme Military Council said Monday. In a statement after its Monday meeting, it said: "It has been decided to cut the links of 18 officers and 32 non-commissioned officers with the Turkish armed forces due to their morality situation and lack of discipline." Well-informed sources indicated that the sacked servicemen were alleged to have been sympathetic to the pro-Islamic Welfare Party, which is favoured to win parliamentary elections on Dec. 24.

Jordan, Israel to cooperate in caring for handicapped

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zaid on Monday conferred at his office in the Royal Court with a delegation representing the Ilan Society for the care of handicapped children in Israel about prospects of Jordanian-Israeli cooperation in rehabilitating handicapped children. The two sides agreed to form a joint committee to draw up ideas and proposals for launching a campaign to raise donations for the handicapped in both countries. The delegation later visited the Jordan Sports Federation for the Handicapped and a school for the blind and listened to briefings by Prince Ra'd about their activities and services to the handicapped children.

Lebanon refuses Israeli demand

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon, itching with Syria, has turned down an Israeli request to place early warning stations in Lebanese territory. Defence Minister Mohsen Dalul said in statements published Monday. Mr. Dalul did not say when the request was made but stressed both Israel and the United States, the key sponsor of Middle East peace talks, were informed of Beirut's rejection. Lebanon took the decision in line with a "brotherhood, cooperation and coordination treaty" it signed with Syria in 1991, Mr. Dalul said.

Morocco and U.S. discuss peace

RABAT (R) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau and Moroccan Prime Minister Abdul Latif Filali held talks on Monday believed to cover Middle East peace and the stalemate in Western Sahara. Moroccan officials said Mr. Pelletreau, who arrived on Sunday for a two-day visit, was also due to meet King Hassan. The Moroccan news agency MAP quoted Mr. Pelletreau as saying in Washington last week that his talks in Morocco and Tunisia would cover the Middle East peace process, the Western Sahara, economic relations, the recent elections in Algeria and the Bosnia peace plan. He also expressed U.S. concern about the delay in holding a U.N. referendum in Western Sahara and said he would explore ways to speed up the process of voter registration in the disputed territory. MAP reported from Washington.

Clinton reports Syrian pledge of cooperation to advance peace effort

U.S. president, after talks with Peres, announces fresh Christopher mission

Israel is ready for unconditional restart of negotiations with Syria, Barak says

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad has pledged to "do his best to move the peace process forward," U.S. President Bill Clinton said Monday.

Mr. Assad made the pledge during a telephone conversation with the U.S. president that was held as Mr. Clinton met with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres at the White House.

Mr. Clinton told reporters at a joint news conference with Mr. Peres that Mr. Assad had also agreed to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher next week to discuss future steps.

Mr. Assad "agreed to my proposal that Secretary Christopher travel to the region next week to consult with him on the next steps we will take together," Mr. Clinton said.

Peace talks between Syria and Israel broke down in June over security arrangements that would follow a possible Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Mr. Christopher is to depart on Thursday for the Middle East after attending the Bosnia peace accord signing in Paris.

"We agree that to close the circle of peace it will take more intensive and more practical negotiations," Mr. Clinton said in the joint news conference with Mr. Peres.

"Each side will need to make a greater effort to take into account the other's concerns," Mr. Peres said that "Syria, together with us, stands in a unique position to contribute to a peaceful Middle East" and vowed to proceed "full speed ahead" to resolve the two sides' differences.

The United States has been working with both sides to find a way to bring peace to the region.

"We are determined that nothing, nothing will deter us from this task in the weeks and the months ahead," Mr. Clinton said.

Before meeting Mr. Peres on Monday, Mr. Clinton said "I am very much looking forward to continue our work on the peace process and continue our strong partnership."

It was the first meeting between the two leaders since Mr. Peres took over as head of government from assassinated Yitzhak Rabin.

Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak said, meanwhile, Israel was offering an unconditional resumption of its stalled peace negotiations.

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West Bank withdrawal gets ahead of timetable

RAMALLAH (Agencies) — The first Palestinian police arrived here Monday as the Israeli army's pullback on the West Bank picked up pace with the announcement they would depart ahead of time from the largest town, Nablus.

An Israeli police spokesman said 13 Jewish settlers were detained for questioning on Monday after they defied an army ban on the entry of Israelis into Nablus.

The settlers were trying to get into a seminary at Joseph's Tomb in the town. The army ban was issued on Sunday ahead of a planned Israeli army redeployment from Nablus, scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday.

Nablus, home to some 130,000 Palestinians, is the largest West Bank town to come under self-rule. The city has been a centre of unrest with almost daily clashes between Palestinian stone-throwers and Israeli soldiers.

Brigadier-General Ziad Al Atrash, head of the Palestinian side of the liaison com-

mittee with Israel said Palestinian police would restore law and order to Nablus after Israel pulls out.

"Police will strike with an iron fist against anybody who tries to meddle in the security of Nablus," Gen. Atrash told Israeli radio.

General Atrash raised the Palestinian flag next to the star of David in the courtyard of the new coordination office for the area, made up of a dozen trailers next to the Israeli army base at the northern entrance to Ramallah.

"The start of the redeployment in Ramallah, after the withdrawal from Tulkarm, proves the Israeli side respects the commitments it had made with us," Gen. Atrash said.

About 400 Palestinians danced and sang as 13 Palestinian National Authority (PNA) policemen opened a security liaison office with Israel on the outskirts of the town of Ramallah as a first step towards an Israeli army pullout from the city later this month.

Under a self-rule deal

signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Washington in September, Israel is scheduled to quit six West Bank towns and hand over civilian authority in hundreds of villages before the year's end. The army's pullout from parts of the seventh city, Hebron, is scheduled to take place in March, 1996.

Israeli troops have already handed over control of the northern towns of Jenin and Tulkarm.

Palestinian police are scheduled to take over the town of Kalkilya on Sunday and Bethlehem next Monday.

In Hebron, Israeli soldiers evicted about 20 Jewish settlers who tried to squat in an empty Arab-owned house, witnesses said.

Hebron is the only West Bank city where Jews live among some 120,000 Palestinians. Israel will hand over parts of the city to the PNA in March 1996.

Ten Palestinian police officers also arrived in the town of Beit Jalla to reinforce policemen at the Bethlehem

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Assassin says he had received rabbis' approval to kill Rabin

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Assassin Yigal Amir said he received the approval of Israeli rabbis to kill Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and would do it again, according to statements he made to police published on Monday.

"I received the blessing of religious leaders," said Amir, 25, whose trial on charges of premeditated murder and aggravated assault begins in a Tel Aviv court on Dec. 19.

Amir's confession to police, which was printed in the Yediot Aharonot newspaper, is the basis of the prosecution's case against the Jewish law student.

He has admitted to shooting Mr. Rabin at a Tel Aviv peace rally on Nov. 4 to try to thwart the accord establishing Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Amir admitted to being influenced by Baruch Goldstein, the Jewish settler who gunned down 30 Palestinians praying at the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron in February 1994.

"I acted by religious imperative: protect Israel against the traitor Rabin, as

have stipulated numerous rabbis who fear for the future of Israel's land and its people," he assassin said.

"I acted for God, for the people and for the land. I hope that it will be useful. I spoke to many people about my intention to kill Rabin," he added.

When asked by investigators: "Who gave you the religious benediction?" Amir responded: "I received the blessing of religious leaders."

"Can you tell us who these religious leaders are?"

— "No."

— "Why?"

— "That is enough."

— "Did the act of Baruch Goldstein influence you?"

— "Yes. My goal was to end the deterioration of the situation. I regret nothing, and would even do it again."

(Nov. 4) with the intention of killing Rabin, to shut him up politically with my revolver," Amir told police.

"I saw that there was no one else to do it, so I decided to do it myself before some crazy person did it, that would have had less impact and would not have stopped the so-called peace process."

He said he prayed at his synagogue before the assassination, "asking God to kill the prime minister."

Amir also provided details about how he was able to get so close to Mr. Rabin and fool officials into thinking he was a security agent by placing his gun on the right side of his belt and posturing as if were part of the entourage.

Amir said he first saw then Foreign Minister Shimon Peres descend from the platform at the peace rally, but decided not to shoot him because he was a "secondary target."

Mr. Peres succeeded Mr. Rabin as prime minister.

"Rabin then came down, accompanied by bodyguards. He walked towards the car,

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DOHA TALKS: The emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, on Sunday meets with the Jordanian foreign minister, Abdul Karim Kabariti, who is visiting Qatar for talks on bilateral relations and other issues related to the Middle East region (AFP photo)

Papandreou in 'dangerous' condition, doctors say

ATHENS (AFP) — Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, hospitalised for the past three weeks, took a turn for the worse Monday, developing a fever because of an infection and has been placed back on a respirator, doctors said.

"The situation is dangerous," said Dr. Georges Vlachos at the Onassio cardiology centre where the 76-year-old premier is being treated.

In a statement, doctors added that since noon GMT Mr. Papandreou had suffered from fever, which was a sign he had contracted another infection.

As soon as the fever be-

came apparent, doctors placed the premier back on a respirator.

The statement said doctors were carrying out laboratory tests to analyse the cause of the infection and were treating it with antibiotics.

Mr. Papandreou's heart is stable, the text added, but said he was still depending on a kidney dialysis machine.

Earlier Monday doctors said Mr. Papandreou's condition had stabilised and that the leader of Greece's governing socialist PASOK party had been breathing on his own for two days.

Mr. Papandreou was

admitted to hospital Nov. 20 with pneumonia, after which his condition worsened, then improved.

In the meantime, PASOK politicians have been jockeying for position in anticipation of his possible resignation.

Government spokesman Tilemachos Khriris said Monday that the prime minister should be out of hospital within 20 days, "before or after the Christmas holidays."

He added that Mr. Papandreou has been talking regularly since Sunday with his wife Dimitra and daughter Sophie.

Saudi envoy hopes King's Saudi visit will be soon

AMMAN (J.T.) — Saudi Ambassador to Jordan Abdullah Soudairi on Monday expressed hope that a planned visit by His Majesty King Hussein to Saudi Arabia would take place soon.

Speaking in an interview with Jordan Television, Mr. Soudairi said the visit, postponed following the hospitalisation of King Fahd two weeks ago, will take place as soon as King Fahd's health improves.

"The health condition of King Fahd is well and as you know he has been discharged from hospital," said the ambassador, adding that the monarch needs to rest for several days.

Mr. Soudairi described Jordanian-Saudi relations as excellent and said they were developing well. "We hope, God willing, they will be back to the former level," the ambassador said, noting that improvement in relations between any two Arab countries ultimately serves pan-Arab interests.

Mr. Soudairi arrived in Amman last month to fill the vacant top spot at the Saudi mission here since 1991.

In Riyadh, Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz on Monday prayed for King Fahd's health following his release from hospital last week, the official Saudi news agency (SPA) reported.

"We thank God for having allowed the Saudi monarch to leave hospital after his recovery from a passing illness," he said, chairing the weekly

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Juppe in intense effort to end strikes

PARIS (Agencies) — Prime Minister Alain Juppe said on Monday he was open to wide-ranging talks with unions to cover employment issues in a new move to appease strikers who have crippled France for the past 18 days.

He said after a series of meetings with union leaders that he had asked Labour Minister Jacques Barrot to begin organising an initial round-table with unions next week. His core welfare reforms were not mentioned in a list of topics he suggested could be included in the talks.

Mr. Juppe said he was "freezing" a railway restructuring plan which has been at the heart of the crippling transport strike.

He made the announcement after a day of talks with union leaders aimed at resolving the crisis. The signing of the five-year plan, which had been due this week, had already been suspended indefinitely.

Announcing the "freezing of the restructuring plan" for state-owned railway system SNCF, Mr. Juppe said "discussions will be undertaken within the company to move forward in developing a future restructuring plan."

Some 180,000 SNCF railworkers have been on strike since Nov. 24 demanding the withdrawal of the plan, which they fear will cost jobs, train lines and pension rights.

The signing of the plan, which had been due on Thursday, had already been delayed for a week. Mr. Juppe indicated during a TV interview Sunday night that it would be delayed for longer than that.

The railway workers' strike has gradually escalated into a broader public sector walk out in protest at Mr. Juppe's welfare reform plans.

Labour unions kept up the pressure on Mr. Juppe in spite of the concessions he offered.

The head of the communist-led CGT, Louis

Shbeilat denies all charges

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The president of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA), Leith Shbeilat, arrested on charges of slandering Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, denied the charges on Monday, according to his lawyer Jawad Yunis.

Mr. Shbeilat was brought before Attorney General Major Mahmoud Obeidat at the State Security Court Monday morning. During questioning, he said he was not guilty of all charges against him. The charges include distributing statements that are considered offensive to Their Majesties, inciting sectarian and ethnic troubles, undermining the country's financial status and shaking the confidence in the Jordanian dinar.

Mr. Shbeilat, who was arrested on Saturday, has been ordered held for two weeks. Mr. Yunis said he would seek a bail today (Tuesday).

According to Mr. Yunis, the four charges, which are believed to be based on lectures Mr. Shbeilat gave in the last two months, are considered as an offence and not crime. Therefore, he said, they carry a maximum sentence of three years.

Serb report, U.S. statement raise hopes for captive pilots

BELGRADE (Agencies) — Two French pilots who were shot down over Bosnia more than 100 days ago are alive, Belgrade's independent BK television station said Monday, the day after a French government deadline for their release came and went.

The report added that a statement on the pilots was expected from the Bosnian Serbs, and reporters at the SRNA news agency in the Serb stronghold of Pale confirmed that they were expecting a communique later Monday.

In Washington, the White House also said it saw some hope of action on the pilots, whose fate has emerged as a new stumbling block on the road to peace in the former Yugoslavia.

There has been some activity in Belgrade, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said in Washington. "We are very hopeful that the two French pilots will be released," he added.

France had threatened to resort to stern action unless the two airmen were released by Sunday but the deadline passed without any news of them, or any apparent French reaction.

In Paris, President Jacques Chirac consulted with top aides on the crisis on Monday, but there was no report on what action was planned. A French statement recalled only that "the detention of

the two pilots endangers the peace process."

The Belgrade television station, owned by a group with links to President Slobodan Milosevic, quoted Yugoslav Defence Minister Pavle Bulatovic as telling NATO assembly member Karsten Fott that the aviators were "safe and sound."

"A statement from the Bosnian Serb leaders is expected during the day," it said, adding that its contents would "lighten the burden" of the pilots' families.

In other developments: — Bosnian Serbs have threatened to bar NATO troops from entering a key Serb-held area of northern Bosnia unless they give advance notice of their patrols, NATO said.

The threat was issued during an incident Sunday near the town of Breko and marks the first such dispute since NATO troops started arriving in the Tuzla region of northeast Bosnia as advance elements of the NATO peace implementation force.

— Sarajevo residents rallied to say they could live happily alongside Serbs in nearby suburbs who are resisting a return to Bosnian government control.

Some 3,000 people, Serbs as well as the city's majority Muslims, gathered on the city's main street in an organised counterblast to recent

protests in Serb-held suburbs against the Dayton peace deal that hands their areas to the government.

The protesters said they wanted to show the will still existed, despite 3-1/2 years of siege and bombardment by Bosnian Serb forces, to live in harmony with Serbs.

"Don't go. We can live together again," said banners waved by the good-natured crowd. They referred to declarations by residents of Serb-held suburbs that they would rather flee their homes than live with Muslims.

At last weekend's London conference delegates agreed on a package of confidence-building measures to try to persuade Serbs not to abandon their homes. Details are still to be announced.

Residents of Serb-held Sarajevo are holding a referendum on Tuesday which is expected to reject the Dayton peace deal.

Antonio Padayee, chief of mission, told reporters: "I want to stress that the Dayton agreement contains important guarantees and safeguards for all the people of Bosnia... including the Serb people of Sarajevo."

These guarantees are varied and many, but significantly include a pledge by all sides who will sign the Dayton agreement Thursday in Paris to amnesty all those not charged with war crimes.

UNICEF marks birthday with anti-war agenda

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — All countries should include in their school curricula methods of conflict resolution that develop mutual understanding and show how differences can be resolved without recourse to violence, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report on the "State of the World's Children" for 1996.

The report, a special edition marking UNICEF's 50th anniversary, said that two million children were killed, four to five million were disabled, 12 million were left homeless, and more than one million orphaned or separated from their families as a result of conflicts.

The report showed that between 1945 and 1992, around 23 million people were killed in 149 major wars. On an annual average, the number of war deaths in this period was more than double the deaths in the 19th century and seven times greater than in the 18th century.

"Wars and political upheavals have been tearing whole countries apart from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Cambodia and Rwanda," the report said. "Children have of course always been caught up in warfare. They usually have little choice but to experience, at minimum, the same horrors as their parents."

"When food supplies have run short," the report added, "it is children who have been hardest hit, since their growing bodies need steady supplies of essential nutrients. Children and families are not just getting caught in the crossfire, they are also specific targets."

The report said this was due to technological developments and the extension of aerial bombardment. But another reason is that most contemporary wars are not between states but between different groups within the same state.

Rape is often used as a weapon of war in ethnic cleansing. More than 20,000 Muslim girls and women have been raped in Bosnia since fighting began in April 1992, said the report, quoting a European Community fact-

finding team. "In addition to rape, girls and women are also subject to forced prostitution and trafficking during times of war, sometimes with the complicity of governments and military authorities. There is also a high risk of infection with sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS that accompany sexual violence against women and girls," read the report.

War and civil unrest also contribute to violence at home. The report said death, upheaval and poverty increase tensions within the family and the likelihood of violence against girls and women. "Men who feel they have lost the ability to protect their women may compensate by exercising violent control over them," it said.

Citing the enormous pain and suffering landmines have inflicted on hundreds of thousands of children over the last several decades, UNICEF called for an international law banning the production, use, stockpiling, sale and export of anti-personnel mines. It also announced that it would not deal with dozens of companies around the world that now manufacture or sell the deadly devices.

UNICEF also argued for an anti-war agenda that emphasised a much more deliberate effort to address the underlying causes of violence, including poverty and to invest more resources in mediation and conflict resolution.

The agenda called for: — The adoption of specific measures to ensure the security of girls and women who face the threats of sexual violence and rape.

The support of an optional protocol that would raise the age of recruitment from 15 as specified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child to 18 years.

The prohibition of the production, use, stockpiling, sale and export of landmines through international law.

The denunciation of barbaric acts of violence during wars. International war crime tribunals should have the support and the resources to bring perpetrators to justice.

Gulf rains wreak havoc, kill 9 in road accident

DUBAI (AFP) — Heavy rains, hail and fog hit the desert Arab Gulf states, killing nine people in a road accident in Saudi Arabia and causing flight delays in the United Arab Emirates, authorities said Monday.

Seven students and two other people were killed when a bus and a truck collided in fog south of the Saudi capital before dawn on Sunday, the Riyadh newspaper reported on Monday.

Heavy rains also lashed Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which included the first hail storm recorded in December in the UAE city of Dubai, meteorologists here said.

Two flights were delayed and one cancelled to Dubai international airport because of the storm early Monday, airport officials said.

Several roads were flooded in this city of almost one million people, causing traffic

jams, but tanker trucks with pumps were deployed to drain off floodwaters, municipal officials said.

"It's been very busy. A lot of complaints have been coming in," John Falcon, an official with the drainage and irrigation department said.

Apartment buildings also flooded, trees lay on the ground after they were uprooted in strong winds, and schools hit by power cuts or flooding sent children home early.

"It's the first time we've had hail in December," a meteorologist at Dubai airport said. It was only the fifth time Dubai was hit by hail since the meteorology office began taking records in 1967.

But the amount of rain — 32.2 millimetres (1.3 inches) from midnight Sunday to 10 a.m. Monday — was not unusual for the time of year, the meteorologists said. Up to 73 millimetres has been recorded.

Algerian editors, protesting closure of Liberte, shut down all newspapers

PARIS (R) — Editors of Algeria's independent newspapers, in a show of united anger, used their front pages on Monday to condemn the government suspension of a leading daily and the arrest of two of its staff members.

They then shut their own papers for at least three days. "These arbitrary actions (suspension and arrests), from an era which we believed gone for ever, came as if by chance on the same day as the celebration of International Human Rights Day," the newspaper editors' association said in a statement on their papers' front pages.

Algerian authorities, who have given themselves draconian powers over the press in their battle against Muslim fundamentalists, on Sunday ordered the French-language newspaper Liberte shut for two weeks. They accused the daily of carrying repeated tendentious information. Security forces also arrested its editor Hacene

Puandji and director-general Outoudert Abrouss as they were about to board a plane for France, a spokesman for the suspended newspaper said.

The independent newspapers' editors on Sunday, at a crisis meeting at Liberte newspaper headquarters in Algiers, decided to close their papers from Tuesday, using Monday's editions to voice their anger and explain their action to readers, the Liberte spokesman told Reuters.

The editors' statement said they would close for three days but prolong the protest if Liberte remained closed.

Liberte's spokesman, speaking by telephone from Algiers, said the Interior Ministry ordered his paper's suspension from Monday, allegedly for "repeated tendentious information."

He said the editors and journalists believed the authorities shut Liberte because of a report on

Thursday about President Liamine Zeroual's senior aide, former General Mohammed Betchine.

The two detained newspapermen were quizzed by a court official, he added. The editor was later released but the director was held in custody for a further hearing and possible trial.

"The arrest looked like a true kidnapping because no one of the authorities' service was able to give information about their fate," said the statement by the editors' association, which groups Algeria's main independent papers.

Government-controlled La Tribune newspaper, in a reference to the four-year-old Islamist revolt against the state, said the suspension was the results of 10-year-old reflexes, which had produced a generation of people believing that the only "means of defence left is to have a gun."

Omar Belhouche, director of the influential Al Watan newspaper,

wrote on Monday: "Some weeks ago, the slogan in vogue was 'the coffin or exile.' Today the impression is 'subjugation or jail.'"

He was referring to the killing of at least 60 journalists and media employees and to the hundreds of journalists who have fled the country after being targeted from June 1993 by fundamentalists who perceive them as backing the authorities.

The Al Watan director has escaped several rebel attempts to kill him and also been banned by the authorities from writing since his paper carried reports of alleged corruption.

Le Matin newspaper, whose editor Said Mekbel was shot dead last December in Algiers, wrote: "This serious attack against press freedom and human rights occurred just hours after news of an attack against a television technician and three days after the killing of a woman journalist from the Echoukouk newspaper."

Sudan rebels said to quit Juba frontline

KAMPALA (Agencies) — The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) rebels have withdrawn from their frontline positions around the southern city of Juba to avoid heavy concentrations of government forces there, the Ugandan state-owned New Vision newspaper reported here on Monday.

Emmy Allio, New Vision's staff writer reporting from the frontline of the SPLA's current offensive, said the SPLA rebels "pulled out from the frontline and were now stationed two miles south of the river."

Mr. Allio said the bridge over the River Kit, was blown up by retreating government troops after a battle on Nov. 16, during which the SPLA claimed to have killed more than 500 government soldiers.

"With SPLA forces now unhindered by lack of a bridge to cross Kit River, before finally attacking Juba, they are planning how best to handle the situation of first disposing off the government soldiers across the river and

then crossing the river for the onslaught," Mr. Allio said.

Mr. Allio said he was conducted around the war front by SPLA commander Major Nak and saw the rebel fighters dug in their trenches and others operating several tanks and a number of artillery pieces, missiles mounted on motor vehicles and other support guns.

The area was also littered with corpses of people killed during the Nov. 16 battle, with vultures and flies hovering over them, but SPLA fighters were eating and smoking only 20 metres away from the rotting corpses.

Mr. Allio said he was warned not to step where there were no foot-marks as landmines and anti-personnel mines were planted all over the area by rebel fighters themselves, while everyday there were raids by Sudanese military Antonov cargo planes and MIG-21 fighter planes.

During one such raid last Thursday, a bomb dropped by an Antonov plane buried

an SPLA soldier, but he was dug out by his colleagues before he died.

Sudan has accused Ugandan troops of leading the new rebel offensive, claiming that Kampala had armed the rebels with sophisticated weapons.

Uganda has denied the charges and, instead, accused Sudan of harbouring and training rebel groups fighting to oust President Yoweri Museveni's regime.

Last week Mr. Museveni threatened to launch commando raids into Sudan if Khartoum did not arrest and expel Ugandan rebels operating from inside Sudan.

Sudan has ordered measures to win over the population living in areas recaptured from rebels in the mainly non-Islamic south of the country, it was reported Monday.

The government called for more coordination to provide services to "liberated areas" and "enhance" peace moves, after hearing a report on efforts to resettle people dis-

placed by the civil war.

The report was delivered by Lino Rol Deng, a southern rebel who is secretary-general of the "High Council for Peace" set up by the government of General Omar Al Bashir to spearhead reconciliation moves.

Mr. Deng told a meeting Sunday of the cabinet chaired by Gen. Bashir that the council had managed to resettle 150,000 people who had deserted areas controlled by the SPLA.

Mr. Deng said \$4,000 of these people had withdrawn support from the SPLA after being convinced that the government was genuinely committed to peace, development and a fair distribution of wealth under the country's federal system.

The Sudan Al Hadith daily said Monday that the government had ordered officials to tour southern states to explain the peace initiative and to those of the 10 southern states to "work for normalisation of life in the safe areas."

Safe Cyprus turns into underworld battleground

NICOSIA (AFP) — The safe island of Cyprus where people leave their cars and homes unlocked has turned into a battleground for underworld gangs which settle scores with car bombs and Kalashnikovs.

"Cyprus is beginning to look a little bit like Sicily," said one commentator, referring to the Italian mafia. On Friday, police said they had found an apparent hit-list of almost 200 names in the latest twist of a gang war that has claimed eight lives so far this year in economically booming Cyprus.

Documents and maps with the names of almost 200 people were found in the pockets of a victim of a car bomb in the town of Nicosia. Police spokesman Savvas Antoniadou told AFP. Kalashnikovs were killed in an explosion in the coastal city of Larnaca last month while apparently handling a bomb.

Investigating officer Andreas Kokos said before a court in Larnaca that evidence pointed to "a plan to murder different people using automatic guns, explosive substances and cars."

Eight people have been shot dead or killed in late-night bombings this year, in an underworld war between gangs involved in running cabarets, massage parlours and gambling clubs in increasingly affluent Cyprus.

In October, a sniper using a Kalashnikov rifle shot dead his victim as he stood on the balcony of his gambling club in Limassol.

Last month, a cabaret owner in the same seaside town was shot dead in a hail of more than 50 bullets while at the wheel of his BMW in an ambush by two other cars.

The gangland hits, one of which took place before the eyes of an off-duty policeman, have shocked this

Mediterranean holiday island which prides itself as a safe haven from the turmoil of the nearby Middle East.

"In Cyprus, houses and cars are kept unlocked. It's like a big village where everybody knows everybody," said a tourism expert.

The village mentality in the Greek-Cypriot south of the divided island ensures that a convict's photograph often goes into the local newspapers, bringing shame on the family.

The crime rate is remarkably low for the population of 625,000: an average 600 crimes a year per 100,000 people, compared to around 6,000 in Europe.

But the underworld has been playing by its own rules, with gangs in different towns known as "fratras" running vendettas without any arrests having taken place so far this year.

The main battle is for con-

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia offers to help find Cyprus settlement

NICOSIA (AFP) — Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Krilov arrived here Sunday offering to help efforts to find a settlement between the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot communities on this divided island. "A combination of all efforts is necessary to reach a solution, under the auspices of the U.N. Security Council," he told reporters. "A solution will not be viable without the participation of my country," he said, referring to a U.S.-British initiative to resume direct talks. "It is better to work as a team." The United States has proposed talks next month between President Glafcos Clerides, who is Greek-Cypriot, and Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash in a bid to resolve the island's 21-year division. U.S. special envoy Richard Beattie made the proposal at the end of a three-day visit to the Mediterranean island on Wednesday. Under the proposal, the two leaders would discuss Cyprus's bid to join the European Union, the terms of a political settlement and demilitarisation when they meet in January. Mr. Clerides said he would give his answer on Wednesday.

Ecuador to import Israeli warplanes

QUITO (AFP) — Ecuador's air force would not immediately confirm or deny Sunday an Israeli report that the South American country was negotiating to buy eight Israeli combat planes. The report, published Sunday by the Tel Aviv daily Haaretz, said Israel submitted a request to the U.S. Defence Department for permission to sell eight Kfir combat planes to the Ecuadorian air force. Israel would need U.S. approval for the sale because the aircraft are built with U.S.-made engines. Ecuadorian air force officials refused immediate comment and said they were unaware of any such deal. Ecuador and Peru clashed in January in a three-week armed conflict over an incompletely demarcated 80-kilometre segment of the border between the two countries in the Cordillera del Condor mountain range.

Gunmen rake Ciller party's election bureau

ISTANBUL (R) — Gunmen killed a teenager and injured six people when they raked an Istanbul election office of Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's True Path Party (DYP), the semi-official Anatolia news agency said on Monday. The agency said a group of five unidentified attackers fired as they drove by the office in a taxi late on Sunday in Istanbul's Gaziosmanpasa district, where a drive-by shooting at a cafe used by local Alevis Muslims sparked violent riots in March. About 17 people died in those riots. A 15-year-old boy died in Sunday's attack, Anatolia said. Police were not immediately available for comment. The agency said police found an unexploded hand grenade on the pavement by the office. A prominent stockbroker standing as a parliamentary candidate for Ms. Ciller's DYP in Dec. 24 general polls was killed and burned in his car 10 days ago. Police said they did not think his murder was political.

Qatar recognises Palestinian passport

CAIRO (AFP) — Qatar has decided to recognise Palestinian passports, the emirate's representative to the Arab League announced on Monday. Manie Abdul Hadi Al Hajiri told journalists he informed the league's general secretariat of Qatar's decision which came "to support the Palestinian self-rule authority."

Egyptian housewife caught smuggling artefacts

CAIRO (AFP) — Police arrested an Egyptian housewife attempting to smuggle 12 kilograms of ancient artefacts into Gaza, the government daily Al-Ahram said on Monday. Zeinab Ibrahim Khidir was picked up by Egyptian police at the Rafah border crossing into Gaza on Sunday with the stash of Islamic and pharaonic silver rings and statuettes. Ms. Khidir, a widow, told police the artefacts belonged to her son and that she did not know it was illegal to take them out of the country, the paper said.

Sudan wants normal ties with Kuwait

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha has called for normalisation of relations with Kuwait which were soured by Khartoum's perceived support for Iraq in the 1990-91 Gulf crisis. Mr. Taha was quoted by the official SUNA news agency on Monday as saying his country, which refused to condemn Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, had always supported Kuwaiti independence. "Sudan's stance, which is based on the respect for Kuwaiti independence, remains unshakable despite the clouds that tarnished relations between the two countries during the Gulf crisis," Mr. Taha said. Before the Gulf crisis, Kuwait was one of Sudan's principal Arab backers, giving it soft loans to rehabilitate industrial projects and setting up joint ventures. But Kuwait cut off its support after Sudan's refusal to condemn the Iraqi invasion and its opposition to the U.S.-led coalition which expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991.

Israeli astronaut to join NASA programme

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The first Israeli astronaut is to join the NASA programme in the United States for an eventual flight in space, a report said here Monday. The decision was to be announced during the meeting Monday in Washington between Prime Minister Shimon Peres and U.S. President Bill Clinton, the Maariv newspaper said. It is seen another sign of closer relations between the United States and Israel, where a debate is underway on whether to enter into a military alliance with Washington, the newspaper said. Astronauts from several U.S. allied countries, including Germany, Britain and Japan have already participated in the NASA programme and flown to space. The Israeli astronaut would conduct his training at the NASA centre in Houston, Texas.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:00 Captain Planet
14:30 Earth Star Voyager
15:00 Run the Gauntlet
16:00 The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:30 Sky Trackers
17:00 Fractals
17:30 Seric — Fruits Et Legumes
18:00 Doc. — Croisiere a la Decouverte du Monde
19:00 News in French
19:10 Magazine — Ushuaia
19:30 You Bet Your Life
20:00 The Secrets of the Treasure Island
20:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:10 True Blue
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature film: "The Revenge of Capone"

PRAYER TIMES
04:58 Fajr
06:12 (Sunrise) Duha
11:29 Dhuhr
14:14 Asr
16:37 Maghreb
17:59 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefish, Tel. R10740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Sade Church Tel. 661757
Terrasas Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625236.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 625236.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Community Tel. 845457.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 649332.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.

WEATHER
Bulkein supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Cold weather conditions will prevail with skies cloudy to partly cloudy, rain expected at intervals, and winds westerly moderate to strong. In Agiba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds southerly moderate with a chance of scattered showers, and seas choppy.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min./Max. temp. 3/8
Amman 9/17
Aqaba 2/10
Deserts 8/15
Jordan Valley 8/15

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 10, Aqaba 17. Humidity readings: Amman 100 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Issam Al Asmar 790504
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 744685
Dr. Khalidun Asfour 666773
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab 758483
Ferdows pharmacy 770336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 626672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644943
Shimolani pharmacy 637660
Nairookh pharmacy 626672
Najib pharmacy 847652

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qawa 281741
Alqods pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Yousef Abu Sa'd 989000

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843462
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 697467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information 121
Directory assistance 010230
Central Amman Telephone 775101
Repairs 775101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 687101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 642816
Akhlef Maternity, J. Ann 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmiesani 607071
Shmiesani Hospital 649131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muhsen Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164
Italian, Al-Muhajirun 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775112/6
Army, Marks 891611/15
Queen Aila Hospital 686100
Amal Hospital 607155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 665199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900540
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
BIBUS:
Princess Beams Hospital (02)775555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)772775
Ibn Al Nafisa Hospital (02)347100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
13:10 Frankfurt (YF)
14:20 Rome (AZ)
14:55 Munich, Aleppo (YF)

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)253202, 5, where it should always be verified.

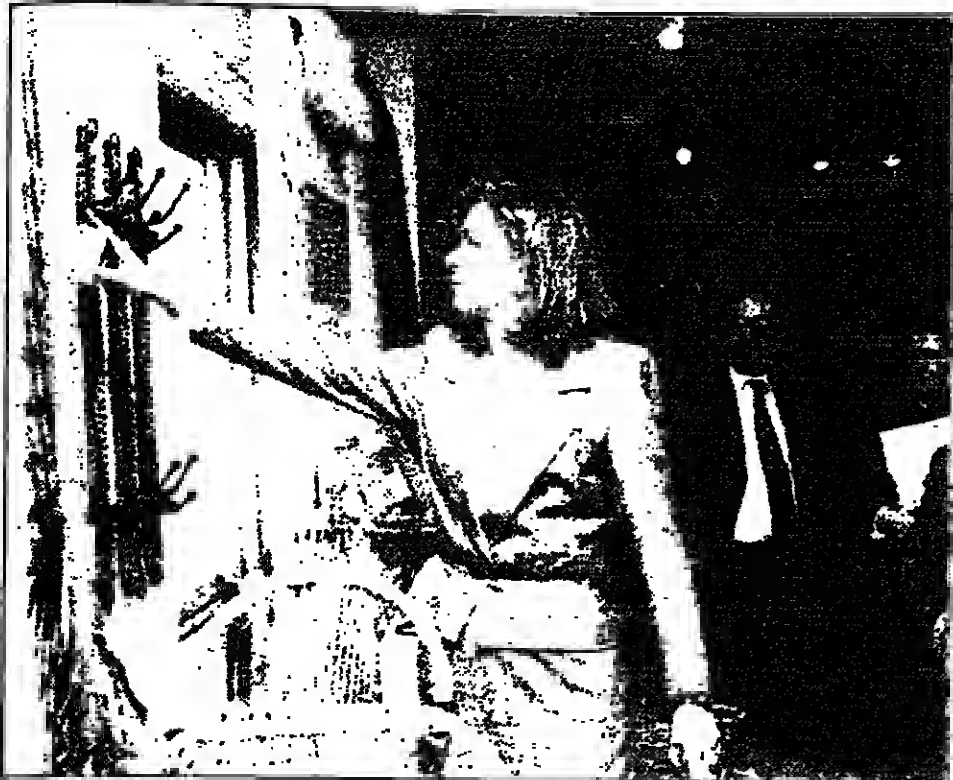
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
04:50 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:00 Aqaba (RJ)
09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 Jordan (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
16:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
13:10 Frankfurt (YF)
14:20 Rome (AZ)
14:55 Munich, Aleppo (YF)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES
Upptower price in ffs per kg.
Apple 700/500
Banana 650
Banana (Minkamari) 627
Banana (imported) 900/700
Cabbage 130/80
Carrot 300/200
Cauliflower 200/120
Cucumbers (large) 150/80
Cucumbers (small) 300/200
Eggplant 200/120
Garlic 750/500
Orange 230/150
Marrow (large) 180/100
Marrow (small) 270/180
Onion (green) 200/120
Onion (dry) 230/170
Orange 540/400
Pepper (hot) 200/140
Pepper (sweet) 200/140
Potato 280/180
Radish 140/80
Spinach 140/80
String Beans 500/350
Tangerine 280/200
Tomato 240/150



Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday Monday tours an exhibition by interior designer Suha Lallas (photo by George Crystal)

Queen chairs NHF executive panel meeting, tours JDTC exhibition

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Design and Trade Centre (JDTC) is exhibiting the designs of Suha Lallas, a local interior designer, using the products of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) projects throughout the country, according to a Royal Court statement.

Ms. Lallas has created both functional and decorative objects through an innovative mixing of raw materials and products, manufactured by NHF income-generating projects for women, primarily weavings from the different parts of the country as well as banana, palm and halvah leaves from the north, the statement said.

Her Majesty Queen Noor visited the exhibition after chairing the regular NHF Executive Committee

meeting, which discussed a range of issues including the plans for the 1996 Queen Noor Award for Children's Literature and two new projects.

According to the statement, the projects comprise training the inhabitants of Wadi Musa to produce and sell traditional silver jewellery as well as the training and promotion of leadership among women in Jordan, in cooperation with the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung Foundation, that will be implemented in NHF projects throughout the country.

The award, which was initiated by the Queen in 1988, encourages the production of quality Arabic songs, stories, poems, plays and scientific works for children that are subsequently published by the

NHF.

Queen Noor also emphasised the importance of maximising the use of specialists in child welfare, education and development, noting that one of the main objectives of the National Task Force for Children would be to promote the integration of children's projects, prevent the duplication of efforts and expand the country's human and material resources, according to the statement.

Attending the meeting were Minister of Energy Sameeh Darwazah, Mayor of Amman Mamdouh Ahadi, Sami Qamouh, president of the NHF Executive Committee, In'am Mufit, NHF's Executive Director, Ibrahim Badran and Suhieh Ma'ani, the statement said.

Voluntary organisations called on to expand their roles

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Prince Firas Ben Ra'ad said Monday that non-governmental and voluntary organisations can play a key role in caring for the handicapped in Jordan by complementing the task of government organisations.

Speaking on Jordan Television following his opening of a two-day workshop on the work of voluntary groups, Prince Firas said Jordan is in need for these

groups to intensify and expand their activities of facilitating the incorporation of the handicapped in regular Jordanian life.

He said voluntary groups are also called upon to bring about changes in general misconceptions, saying handicapped people should be regarded as partners in development rather than liabilities to the society.

The workshop will examine a Jordanian-European project funded by the Euro-

pean community to help in the rehabilitation of handicapped people, especially children.

The workshop, which is held in cooperation with the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), will examine the general situation of the handicapped in Jordan, the role of voluntary organisations in rehabilitation services and QAF activities in this particular field.

Jordan, ILO to work on programme of technical efficiency for workers

AMMAN (J.T.) — International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director General Michel Hans said Monday that Jordan and the ILO will soon prepare a vocational training programme aimed at promoting the technical potential and efficiency of Jordanian workers.

Speaking at a meeting with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Mr. Hans said Jordanian-ILO cooperation in labour-related fields has been developing well and has succeeded in helping the ILO's programmes in the past years.

At the meeting held at the prime minister's office attended by Labour Minister Nader Abul Sha'er and ILO Regional Director Shukri Dajani, the two sides reviewed the general conditions of workers in Jordan.

Mr. Hans came here following a tour of the West Bank and Gaza where he examined workers' conditions. He was received in audience by His Majesty King Hussein and held meetings with the minister of labour.

Mr. Hans, who concluded a two-day visit to Jordan Monday, said the close relationship between Jordan and the ILO has helped the organisation to better understand the condition of workers in the occupied Palestinian lands.

Mr. Hans discussed ILO projects in Jordan and plans for 1996 and was seen off upon his departure by Dr. Abul Sha'er and other officials.



Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Monday meets with International Labour Organisation (ILO) Director General Michel Hans to discuss Jordan-ILO cooperation (Petra photo)

Mobile library set up to service remote areas

By Ghaila Ahul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a bid to increase awareness of the importance of reading among people living in remote areas, the National Library will start extending its services to those areas using a mobile library in the first half of 1996, Osama Miqdadi, General Manager of the National Library said Monday.

"Our aim is to increase awareness among people living in villages, remote and desert areas of the importance of books and help them get used to reading," said Mr. Miqdadi.

He added that the mobile library, which looks like any real library, is very spacious, has shelves on all sides and provides all kinds of books in different fields.

"It is designed exactly like any library. It is bigger than a bus for people to be able to move freely, and the books it provides—cultural, scientific, novels, children's books—are chosen with care," Mr. Miqdadi told the Jordan Times.

He added that the mobile library is also equipped with film facilities. It shows cultural documentaries as well as entertainment films.

Mr. Miqdadi said the

mobile library allows users to borrow books in the same way regular libraries operate. It has check-out cards and records to document its operations, he said.

He added that a librarian will supervise the check-out procedure which allows citizens to borrow books for a maximum period of two weeks.

The mobile library, which will cost JD 60,000, will stay in a certain area for two days, during which the reader will have the choice of either reading the book in that period or borrowing for two weeks.

According to a special plan, each time the mobile library goes to a certain area, it will introduce new materials to its shelves to give people the opportunity to choose from a variety of books, Mr. Miqdadi said.

He added that the library will also try to cater for special requests by providing reading materials which are not usually available in the library.

Mr. Miqdadi said that the final aim of his department is to encourage residents of remote areas to build their own local libraries, adding that the national library will provide them with training, assistance as well as books.

Aqaba hit again by small quake

Expert says situation is stabilising

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An earthquake registering 5.5 on the Richter scale hit the Gulf of Aqaba Monday at dawn, official sources said.

The quake, the second to hit the region in four days and which caused no injuries or damages, was a normal aftershock of the powerful earthquake that struck the area on Nov. 22, according to Mohammad Dawoud Fandi, a geophysicist at the Natural Resources Authority (NRA).

"Aqaba residents need not worry about it," Mr. Fandi said. He told the Jordan Times that Monday's quake indicated that the situation is becoming stable, "because time between the occurrences of the aftershocks is extending."

This indicates that the series of aftershocks are

gradually declining and "hopefully the area will not be hit by any major earthquakes."

"It will take at least one month before the tremors end and until then, there might be some observed quakes, but nothing to worry about," he added.

According to the geophysicist, the earthquake was centred 120 kilometres south of Aqaba and occurred at 3:35 a.m. The duration was about 12 minutes but people only felt the shaking for half a minute.

"We were awakened by noises coming from the walls of our house and we realised that it was another earthquake," one Aqaba resident said.

She added that many people have become accustomed to the tremors and that she has already prepared herself in case of any emergency.

"I placed mattresses on

top of the dining table to hide under in case of an earthquake," she said.

Director of the Aqaba Civil Defence Department (CDD) Lieutenant Colonel Omar Tarawneh said that no serious disturbances were reported other than panic among some residents following the earthquake.

According to Lieut. Col. Tarawneh, the CDD has been distributing pamphlets in schools, factories, centres and major buildings to raise public awareness regarding procedures to take in case of an earthquake.

On Dec. 8, Aqaba residents were awakened by a light earthquake measuring 4.9 on the Richter scale. Dozens of aftershocks measuring between 3 and 4 on the Richter scale were recorded since the Nov. 22 earthquake which measured 6.2.

Housing department distributes plots to low-income groups

AMMAN (Petra) — The Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) Monday distributed plots of lands in the Ein Al Basha district near Sweileh to limited income groups who had deposited savings with HUDD for this project.

HUDD Director General Youssef Hiyasat said during a ceremony held for the distribution of the plots that his department had prepared 534 plots for beneficiaries to build houses on.

The beneficiaries, all limited income groups, are offered plots ranging in area between 150 to 300 square metres, Mr. Hiyasat

said.

The total cost of the land bought for this purpose was JD 1.6 million, Mr. Hiyasat added.

HUDD spent another JD 2.14 million on providing infrastructure like schools, roads and electricity and community centres for the beneficiaries, he said.

The facilities built at the site include boys and girls schools, community centre public gardens and a car park in addition to infrastructure and civil works, Mr. Hiyasat said.

Beneficiaries receiving land are of two groups: those who have saved with HUDD in advance and who

get plots at cost; and low-income groups who can buy these plots at market prices, according to Mr. Hiyasat.

He said the HUDD will remain committed to offering housing services to limited and low-income groups and will arrange for beneficiaries who save with the department to buy the plots in instalments through the Housing Bank.

Mr. Hiyasat added that the department has saved some plots for people wishing to open stores or start businesses at the site and that plots for these purposes will be sold at market prices.

Businessmen to meet with EU envoys to discuss projects

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of 200 Jordanian businessmen Wednesday will meet with envoys representing European Union (EU) embassies in Amman to discuss the outcome of the October Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit and the recent Barcelona conference.

The meeting, organised by the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, will follow up on projects proposed at the MENA summit and will deal with cooperation between Jordan and the EU.

In addition, it will delve into developments in the EU-Jordanian partnership negotiations.

The association aims to familiarise Jordanian businessmen with the current role of the EU and its future objectives.

Representing the European side at the meeting will be the ambassadors of the United Kingdom, France, the EU, the Spanish ambassador's advisor, the Spanish commercial attaché, the second commercial secretary at the Italian embassy, the French commercial attaché, the Austrian com-

mercial attaché, and a representative of the Swedish embassy in Amman.

On Tuesday, a delegation representing the association will meet with Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf.

The meeting is part of a series of contacts organised by the association with ministers in charge of economic affairs to exchange views on partnership between the public and private sector and means to serve the national economy.

In another development, the board of the Amman Chamber of Industry on Monday decided to set up a committee to follow up the implementation of recommendations issued by the MENA summit and contacts between Jordanian and foreign businessmen who took part in the summit.

The committee, headed by chamber president Khalid Abu Hassan, includes as members Abdul Ilah Tabaa, Ziad Himst, Imad Shammaa, Abdul Haleem Abdeen and Abdul Noor Habaibeh.

NEWS IN BRIEF

House committee debates budget

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament's Finance Committee on Monday resumed discussion of the 1996 fiscal budget in the presence of Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh. The committee, which will issue recommendations to the House before it starts debating the state budget, will meet with several officials and experts to hear their views on the fiscal budget law.

Ajloun mayor criticises land appropriations

AJLOUN (Petra) — Ajloun Mayor Mohammad Smadi criticised government's appropriation of lands in Ishafina area to establish government buildings, saying this harms the forest area and the environment. Mr. Smadi, who prepared a study on the issue, said some government departments appropriated the lands to establish buildings and silos to be used by the Ministry of Supply. He added that this means trees in the building area will be removed and in the future traffic will increase when trucks will be used to transport grains to and from the planned silos.

FILMS

* "Bugsy Malone" at the British Council at 7.00 p.m.

* "Der Untertan" (in German with subtitles in English) at Goethe-Institut at 8.00 p.m.

LECTURES

* "Journalism and Information" (in Arabic) with the participation of Fakhri Kavar and Nabil Sharif at the Orthodox Club at 6.30 p.m.

* "Lutte Biologique en Agriculture" by Mr. Bigot at the French Cultural Centre at 6.00 p.m.

* Recital of short stories by Mahmoud Rimawi at the Phoenix Gallery, Gardens St., at 6.00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by artist Hind Nasser at

Darat Al Funun (until Jan. 6)

* Bawadi's "Season Of Joy" exhibition, a collection of rugs and ceramics, at the National Ceramics Centre, Khaldi from 9.00 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. Tel. 825241, 834688. (Until Dec. 12)

* Photography by poet Ibrahim Nasrallah entitled "The Autobiography of an Eye" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. (Until Jan. 4)

* Photography exhibition "Biblical Itineraries" at the French Cultural Centre. (Until Dec. 30).

CHRISTMAS SALE

* Gifts and crafts by Suha Lallas Kassieh (includes Christmas items, table mats, baskets, wall-hangings, candle-holders and side-lamps) at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (until Dec. 31).

Sri Lankan forces hunt Tamil Tiger rebels in east

COLOMBO (Agencies) — Sri Lankan troops and planes are attacking large groups of Tamil Tiger guerrillas who have redeployed in jungle bases in the east after the fall of their northern Jaffna stronghold, defence officials said Monday.

"We have launched search and destroy operations against terrorist bases in the jungles where our intelligence says they have regrouped," a senior military officer in the east said. "We asked for air support and they have taken some targets."

A senior air force officer said aircraft and helicopters had been deployed to support ground troops.

Police commandos, backed by army and air force ground troops, have surrounded several rebel jungle bases in the Batticaloa and Amparai districts, officials said.

But they said the rebels invariably slipped out and evaded troops as they knew the terrain and moved in small groups, mainly at night.

"We have to keep pressure on their jungle hideouts to disrupt their plans for attacks," the senior officer in the east said.

The National News Agency said Sunday the army was sending more soldiers, including commandos and air-mobile troops fresh from their victory in Jaffna, to the east.

Air force planes bombed a rebel base in the jungle at Kanjikudichiaru in eastern Amparai district Saturday, defence officials said.

Rebel radio traffic intercepted by army electronic warfare experts indicated the Tigers had suffered heavy casualties in the air strike, they added.

Military intelligence sources said the Liberation Tigers Of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were planning to regroup and establish a base area in Batticaloa, where the army is thinly stretched after pulling out most of its troops for the capture of Jaffna.

The rebels have launched a propaganda campaign in areas they control in the east to get more support from residents, they said.

The Tigers were also recruiting more fighters there to fill ranks depleted by the Jaffna fighting, they said.

Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte has said he estimates rebel strength had fallen to about 5,000 from 12,000 after the capture of Jaffna last week.

The army's capture of the town in its biggest offensive in 12 years of war marked

"the beginning of the end" of the Tamil Tigers, Mr. Ratwatte was quoted as saying Sunday.

The rebels were believed to be planning more massacres of Sinhalese villagers in remote hamlets bordering the jungles, the intelligence sources said.

Marauding groups of Tigers butchered more than 100 Sinhalese men, women and children in a series of raids on hamlets in the east after the army launched its offensive to capture Jaffna town on Oct. 17.

Mr. Ratwatte said that if the rebels' war for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east were to end and peace to take hold, the government's political package offering Tamils extensive autonomy had to be implemented.

The government says it wants to weaken the LTTE, who broke a ceasefire in April, to bring them back into talks to end the war in which more than 50,000 people have died since 1983.

Meanwhile Sri Lanka's influential Buddhist clergy has for the first time supported a radical ethnic peace plan following a key government victory over Tamil Tiger rebels in the country's north, officials said Monday.

The top Buddhist monks backed the autonomy package during a meeting with President Chandrika Kumaratunga Sunday when she called on the clergy to inform them on the army's successful capture of Jaffna.

Officials quoted Chief Priest Palipane Chandananda as saying that Colombo was keen on a peaceful solution to the conflict which had claimed over 50,000 lives since 1972 but the LTTE opposed it.

"The Maha Sanga (Buddhist clergy) would fully support the president in her efforts to wipe out terrorism, rehabilitate war-torn areas and usher in peace," Chandananda said.

He had earlier asked the government to shelve Mrs. Kumaratunga's constitutional reforms until the LTTE was crushed militarily and supported the army's campaign against the Tigers to capture Jaffna.

Following the army's capture of Jaffna after nearly 50 days of heavy fighting, the government says it will press ahead with granting greater autonomy to minority Tamils in exchange for ethnic peace.

Most Sri Lankans are Buddhists, while the minority Tamils are mainly Hindus.



Bangladeshi policemen take a break during the second day of an opposition-called general strike in Dhaka against the government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia (AFP photo)

Militants hurl bombs in Bangladesh strike

DHAKA (R) — Militants hurled homemade bombs in the port city of Chittagong Monday as political violence shook Bangladesh again on the third day of a crippling general strike aimed at forcing out Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

Police said most of the bombs were like firecrackers but some were more lethal. At least 20 people were injured in the bombings, a local journalist said quoting police and witnesses.

Smoke wafted over a five kilometre area between Chittagong's Agrabad commercial district and the port. "A few bombs exploded on the port compound as well, but apparently caused no damage," one witness said.

In the capital Dhaka five people were hurt when unidentified activists hurled bombs at a march by the Jamaat-E-Islami party, one of the opposition groups staging the three-day strike to oust Mrs. Khaleda and force changes in a general election plan.

Bombs also exploded in the city's Bijoy Swarni area where opposition activists set a mini-taxi on fire. At Mahakhali, women activists of the opposition Jatiya Party fought a running battle with women police, witnesses said.

Police said unidentified attackers also hurled two petrol bombs Sunday at the home of Mohammad Nasim, a senior official of the main opposition Awami League, but no one was hurt.

A general election has been called for Jan. 18. The opposition threatened Monday to escalate its action to get the polls rescheduled and held under a neutral caretaker government, rather than with Mrs. Khaleda and the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

"There can be no election under the BNP government. Any attempt to pursue it will invite a harsher response," Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina said. "The country is heading for a disastrous future and it can only be saved if the power-crazy prime minister realises the gravity of the situation and stands down."

The strike has paralysed Bangladesh since Saturday. The only vehicles moving were rickshaws and most offices and businesses were closed, witnesses said. Police stepped up security after violence on the first two days in which more than 1,000 people were injured.

Guns were fired and home-made grenades thrown in clashes Sunday. A member of an opposition party was stabbed Friday. Mrs. Hasina and her allies have said they will resist the January election at all costs. They say they will boycott it unless Mrs. Khaleda hands over to a neutral interim administration.

The opposition accuses Mrs. Khaleda's government of rigging a 1994 parliamentary hy-election and of corruption, and says no election held under her can be fair.

It has mounted a long campaign of often-violent rallies, general strikes and transport blockades to try to oust her.

Mrs. Khaleda, elected in 1991 in what were billed as Bangladesh's first free polls, denies the vote-rigging and graft accusations. Chief election commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque, said in an interview with the independent UNB news agency Sunday the election could be delayed until Feb. 22 if all sides agreed.

But an understanding must be reached by Dec. 17, the deadline for registering to enter the January election. "Otherwise, we will have to declare anyone who has filed a nomination and had no rivals as a member of parliament elected uncontested," Judge Sadeque said.

Soirées in both the BNP and the opposition said Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku had sent a letter to Mrs. Hasina and Mrs. Khaleda on Dec. 7 offering his help to solve the political crisis. No parties had yet replied. The Commonwealth chief sent his special envoy Sir Ninian Stephen to Dhaka in October 1994 in an earlier unsuccessful attempt to mediate between the country's political rivals.

N. Korea on brink of famine — U.N. official

LONDON (R) — Secretive and impoverished North Korea is on the brink of famine following summer floods and a poor international response to pleas for food aid, a senior United Nations official said Monday.

"There are all the signs of an approaching famine," said Trevor Page, director of the World Food Programme (WFP) in North Korea.

"It is very disturbing that there is no food aid arriving" since the first modest shipment of 5,140 tonnes last month, he said in a telephone interview from the capital, Pyongyang.

Mr. Page said the aid that had arrived was "totally inadequate" and was only enough to feed 363,000 people for three weeks, out of a total population of around 23 million.

Malnutrition was a severe problem in some areas and some children were below 80 per cent of their average target weight for their height, he added.

Mr. Page said even in Pyongyang, "people don't get enough to eat", although they were not starving.

He said about 70 people had died and about 500,000 were severely affected by August floods, after which the Communist country accepted food aid for the first time in its history.

The Geneva-based International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said last month some 400,000 hectares (988,000 acres) of arable land were ruined by the floods and

granaries were also destroyed. The country's main crop is rice.

The supply problem is now exacerbated by the onset of winter. No figure for the percentage of total crop ruined by the floods was available.

North Korea rarely grants visas to westerners and has until recently viewed accepting foreign aid as a threat to its sovereignty.

But Mr. Page said North Korean officials "take me wherever I want to go" and were cooperating fully with the WFP.

"The first shipment...was well distributed, that went fine...But after that there is nothing."

In contrast, in 1991 a visiting U.N. team was "treated a bit like spies" and had not been able to assess needs, a WFP spokesman in Rome said last month. No assistance was provided.

The spokesman said the November shipment had been paid for almost entirely from the WFP's emergency funds. No more aid could be sent until donations had been made to replenish the organisation's coffers.

The United Nations appealed in September for \$15.7 million for disaster relief but only a small portion has materialised.

North Korea is deeply impoverished, with recurrent but unconfirmed reports of widespread hunger and disease in rural areas, in contrast to booming South Korea, one of the world's fastest growing economies.

Japan opposition leader decides to step down

TOKYO (R) — Former Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu has decided to step down as leader of Japan's main opposition party, a party spokesman said Monday.

The spokesman said Mr. Kaifu, prime minister from 1989 to 1991, intended to back Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) secretary general, Ichiro Ozawa, in the Dec. 27 election for the party presidency.

"I hope candidates in the presidential election will compete by focusing on policies and the future image of the party. I have decided to pass the baton to Mr. Ozawa and to give up running in the election," Mr. Kaifu told a news conference late Sunday.

Mr. Ozawa, 53, considered the mastermind of a political realignment which led nine opposition parties to band together a year ago to form Shinshinto, has scheduled a news conference for Monday at which he was expected to announce his formal candidacy for president.

Candidates have until Saturday to enter the contest, the result of which is due to be announced on Dec. 28.

Mr. Ozawa's main and possibly only challenger will be another former prime minister, Tsutomu Hata.

The leadership battle has been set off by Shinshinto's failure so far to attract widespread voter support.

An opinion poll last week showed the party had a popular rating of only 12 per cent, far behind Prime

Minister Tomiichi Murayama's coalition of his Socialist Party, the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Sakigake Party of Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura.

Mr. Kaifu, Mr. Ozawa and Mr. Hata were all once LDP politicians who split from the party two years ago amid corruption scandals and accusations that it was too closely linked to business.

Since then the LDP, under its own new leader Ryutaro Hashimoto who is Japan's tough-talking trade minister, has clawed its way back to the top of opinion polls.

Political analysts believe a Shinshinto leadership battle could cause a split in the party, with some members even returning to the LDP fold, making the latter even stronger as general elections loom.

Mr. Hata, who headed a fragile minority government for two months in 1994, made his name as a champion of political reform at the height of the charges of corruption against the LDP.

Mr. Ozawa, a politician many Japanese love to hate, is blunt, assertive and seemingly unafraid of making enemies — characteristics seldom seen in his country's politics.

His 1993 book, Blueprint For A New Japan, set sales records for political books in Japan and drew attention overseas for its calls for a more assertive Japanese foreign policy and greater efforts by Tokyo to cut trade barriers.

Minister says Japan reactor leak will not change policy

TOKYO (R) — Japanese government officials Monday downplayed a recent accident at a prototype fast-breeder reactor on the Sea of Japan coast, and stressed their intention of upholding the country's nuclear energy programme.

"My personal conviction is that Japan, as a country poor in its own natural resources, needs to continue its nuclear energy programme," Science and Technology Agency Minister Yasuaki Urano told a news conference.

Last week up to three tonnes of sodium leaked from a cooling system at the Monju reactor in Fukui prefecture in central Japan, forcing it to be manually shut down.

"Taking an objective look, the accident was not gravely serious," Tomio Tsutsumi, international trade and industry vice minister, told reporters.

"It was a type of accident that had been expected. That is why precautionary mea-

sures had been prepared in case of such an incident," he said.

The 230-megawatt reactor produces more fuel than it uses and is operated by the government's Power Reactor And Nuclear Fuel Development Corporation (PNC).

A PNC spokesman said there was no danger of radioactivity from the leak, adding the corporation had started draining the remaining sodium out of the cooling system Monday to start investigating the leak.

It will take about three days to remove an estimated 340 tonnes of sodium from the system, the spokesman said.

The liquid sodium, which is used as a coolant, will be placed in a nearby tank during investigations into the cause of the accident, he said.

Japan relies on nuclear reactors for 33 per cent of its power and the government aims to raise that to 42 per cent by 2010.

Clashes raise concern about Angola truce

HARARE (AFP) — A few weekend clashes between Angolan government troops and former rebels in strategic areas in the north and east have sharpened fears that the fragile truce in this battle-scarred country could fall apart, observers said.

Trouble notably has flared up since last month in the oil-rich northern region of Soyo and in north Lunda in the east, a diamond mining region. It has sparked concern about the country's commitment to the Lusaka peace accords of November 1994, under which rebels were to disarm and both sides to quarter soldiers before merging into a new national army.

On Sunday, government representatives in Lunda and Moxico, also in the east, blamed UNITA — the Union For The Total Independence Of Angola

led by Jonas Savimbi — for artillery attacks on the town of Ntazi and called for a general mobilisation.

They warned there could be a "bloodbath" if the United Nations, which has troops in Angola to oversee the truce, did not do something.

UNITA Radio Vorgan meanwhile charged that nine of its soldiers were killed Sunday in fighting with government troops in Pedra-De-Feitico, near Soyo in the north.

UNITA military chiefs warned this could only increase "negative consequences" in that zone where tension has been high since UNITA abruptly stopped disarming and quartering its soldiers last month to protest a series of government attacks.

UNITA had only started the operation on Nov. 20,

the first anniversary of the Lusaka Accords, and quartered only 400 of its troops in the central city of Vila-Nova — far short of the 150 troops a day the United Nations had requested.

Special U.N. envoy to Angola Alioune Blondin Beye has deplored the government attacks in the north and stressed they could not have come at a worse time. He tried to smooth matters by meeting both President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi but it did nothing to ease the strain on the ground.

The two sides are clearly still vying for control over these mineral-rich northern and eastern regions. But so far both have backed off from any large-scale military operations of the sort that marked the civil war.

Diana's mystery number baffles Britons

LONDON (AFP) — Since the weekly news of the world published a picture of Princess Diana leaving hospital, British press commentators have been trying to decipher the hidden meaning of the number 492 emblazoned on her baseball cap. A Times commentator suggested that it referred to the numerical equivalent of the first three letters of Dibs, the nickname of the Princess of Wales gave to Captain James Hewitt, the dashing horseman with whom the estranged wife of Prince Charles acknowledged having carried on an affair. The commentator explained that "D" was the fourth letter of the alphabet, "I" the ninth and "B" the second. But his theory did not convince Times readers, many of whom came up with their own alternatives. "K. 492" is the number Austrian musicologist Ludwig Von Koechel gave to Mozart's opera The Marriage Of Figaro, said one, stressing that the plot involves a countess madly in love with a soldier. The reader said this could be good news for the royal family since the opera's fourth act ends with a reconciliation between the hero and her husband. But a sports buff said Princess Diana was merely trying to remain in the limelight and tried to equal Michael Atherton, the captain of England's cricket team who made history in the test-match against South Africa by batting 492 balls.

Jackson's condition improves

NEW YORK (R) — Pop megastar Michael Jackson was showing signs of improvement Sunday and the hospital where he is being treated said doctors were thinking of moving him out of intensive care and into a private room. Jackson, 37, collapsed Wednesday during rehearsal for a cable television special that was to be broadcast Sunday. He has since been in the intensive care unit at Beth Israel North Hospital in Manhattan. "Mr. Jackson's status has been upgraded to stable and improving. His medical team is seriously considering moving him to a private room so that he can be better ambulated," a recorded message at the hospital said. "Mr. Jackson's gastroenteritis is under control and his diet has been enhanced to include solid food. His heart status is completely normal," the message said. It added that Jackson "continues to receive hundreds of cards, gifts and flowers from his friends and fans from around the world. All their love and support has been greatly appreciated and helpful to his recovery."

Erotic U.S. photos anger N. Zealanders

WELLINGTON (R) — A controversial exhibition featuring erotic pictures by the late U.S. photographer Robert Mapplethorpe drew protests at its New Zealand opening. Members and supporters of the conservative Christian Heritage Party sang, prayed and made protest speeches at a small demonstration. Exhibition curator Germano Celant told Reuters that despite taking the exhibition around the world for years, he seldom saw public demonstrations. "It's the first time I've seen this kind of manifestation in the street. It was announced in Perth but it never went through, and not in Europe, not in America when I did the show," he said. The exhibition was cancelled in Washington DC, a gallery director was arrested in Cincinnati, Ohio, and in Wellington a censor has rated the show suitable for people only over the age of 18.

Shootings leave Manila businessmen in fear

MANILA (R) — An octogenarian Filipino-Chinese industrialist was shot dead on his way to work Monday and radio reports said a leftist death squad had claimed responsibility.

The leftist Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB) group also claimed responsibility for shooting another Filipino-Chinese businessman, 48-year-old Benjamin Yu, also Monday morning.

Mr. Yu, head of Coastal Packaging Inc., was in critical condition in a Manila hospital, radio reports said.

Police said they thought robbery or a labour dispute may have been the motive for the killing of Leonardo Ty, 82, who was shot dead

along with his driver in the Manila district of Quezon City.

"We are looking into the possibility of involvement of labour groups in one of (Ty's) firms," said police General Ricardo De Leon.

Gen. De Leon said labourers at one of Mr. Ty's firms had threatened a strike to press for a wage rise.

Police also said they were not discounting robbery as Mr. Ty's wallet and briefcase were stolen.

A group of about six young men opened fire with handguns on Mr. Ty's car as he was being driven to his Manila Paper Mills Inc plant in Quezon City.

Aum members admit attack on Tokyo subway

TOKYO (AFP) — Two senior members of the Aum Supreme Truth cult admitted Monday they had released deadly nerve gas into the Tokyo subway in March.

Toru Toyoda, 27, told the Tokyo District Court he had unleashed Sarin gas by pricking a plastic bag with an umbrella. "I committed a terrible, violent crime," he told the court, according to Jiji Press.

Kenichi Hirose, 31, also pleaded guilty to murder charges in connection to the March 20 gassing, which killed 11 people and injured 5,500.

Both are deputy heads of the cult's self-styled "science ministry." Mr. Hirose said he had been ordered by the cult "science minister" Hideki Murai to kill passengers for their "salvation."

Murai, 36, was stabbed to death in front of the cult's Tokyo headquarters in April.

"I'd like to offer heartfelt apologies to the dead and injured," Mr. Hirose said. He also said Aum Supreme Truth guru Shoko Asahara had tried to "become the world's king by using arms."

Mr. Asahara was happy with the casualties in the rush-hour attack, according to Mr. Toyoda and Mr. Hirose.



Boys on Bicycle overtake an armoured personnel carrier on the first day of the general strike in Karachi. The Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) announced the strike as a three-day mourning following the killing of MQM leader Altaf Hussain's elder brother and nephew (AFP photo)

MQM calls off third day of strike in Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Pakistan's ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) called off the third day of a strike Monday to enable mourners to attend the funerals of the murdered brother and nephew of MQM leader Altaf Hussain. The MQM had called for a three-day strike in the southern province of Sindh, of which Karachi is the capital, starting Sunday in protest at the killings of Nasir Hussain, 60, and Arif Hussain, 28, found shot dead with marks of torture Saturday.

The MQM's Karachi-based coordination committee said in a statement that it had decided to call off the last day of the protest so that transport would be available for many people to turn out Tuesday to join

funeral prayers for the martyrs. Police said seven people were killed in attacks in Karachi Sunday and protesters set at least seven vehicles on fire. There were no immediate reports of fresh killings Monday, but witnesses said most of Karachi's shops, businesses and schools stayed shut, while police and paramilitary Rangers in armoured cars rumbled through near-deserted streets.

More than 1,800 people have died in ethnic and sectarian violence in Pakistan's biggest city and economic hub this year. The government says Mr. Hussain is orchestrating the unrest from London, where he has been living in self-exile since 1992. The MQM

accuses security agencies of persecuting its members. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto urged the "sane elements" in the MQM Sunday to persuade its leadership to abandon the strike, which has paralysed Karachi and other towns in Sindh. She ordered security agencies to investigate the killings of Mr. Hussain's relatives, and the Sindh provincial government said it would set up a judicial inquiry to "find the real culprits".

The MQM has accused the government of killing the two men in revenge for last month's assassination of the brother of Sindh Chief Minister Abdullah Shah. The government denies the charge. Ms. Bhutto said all three men might be victims of

S.Korean ex-president on 8th day of hunger strike

SEOUL, (R) — South Korea's humiliated former President Chun Doo Hwan refused food as he kept up a strike in his detention cell for the eighth day Monday, and prison officials worried about his deteriorating health. "He didn't eat this morning except barley tea. He seems pretty weak and is not in a good shape," said an official at the Justice Ministry. He declined to go into detail.

A prison official said Sunday the authorities might have to take action about his health if he continued to refuse to eat. He did not say whether Mr. Chun would be force-fed. Meanwhile, ex-President Choi Kyu-Hab snubbed a summons by prosecutors to appear for questioning Monday at 10 a.m. (0100 GMT). The domestic Yonhap news agency said prosecutors were planning to visit him at home. "He didn't come in today

as requested. We have not yet decided on what to do," a prosecution official told Reuters. Prosecutors want to question Mr. Choi as a witness to help piece together the sequence of military events that enabled Mr. Chun, then a major-general, to mastermind a December 1979 coup that led to an army massacre crushing civilian resistance in Kwangju in May 1980, with an official death toll of about 200 people.

Mr. Choi was caretaker head of state after the assassination of President Park Chung-Hee in October 1979. He was toppled by Mr. Chun, who led a group of young military in the daring putsch. An aide to Mr. Choi earlier said the ex-president was unlikely to appear at the prosecutors office because of ill health. Mr. Chun was arrested and detained on Dec. 3 on charges of military rebellion

stemming from the coup. Prosecutors were expected to indict Mr. Chun by Dec. 22, the last day prosecutors are allowed to detain him legally. "Since the deadline falls on Dec. 22, we expect to formally indict him on that day or before," the prosecution official said. Mr. Chun will be the second former president to face corruption charges. Mr. Chun, who ruled South Korea with an iron fist from 1980-88, has refused solid food since his arrest on Dec. 3. His wife Lee Soon-Ja is at a remote monastery where she and her husband once lived in self-imposed exile for two years. "She came here originally for a seven-day praying period. But if she decides to stay longer, she can," a Buddhist monk at the monastery in northern Kangwon Province said Sunday. He said Ms. Lee, who

Russian candidates try to win big swing vote

MOSCOW (R) — Candidates in Russia's parliamentary election flooded television screens Monday with campaign adverts to try to catch the huge swing vote in the last week before Sunday's poll. Television channels squeezed dozens of advertisements between scheduled programmes over the weekend and Monday, a holiday for most Russians before Tuesday's Constitution Day. Opinion polls suggest the Communist Party is set for a big win, but also indicate that up to half the 104 million voters are still unsure who to back. Many politicians and pollsters believe much will be decided in the last few days. "I think the last week will be the hardest and most difficult. You can expect the unexpected to happen," Yekaterina Lakhova, a leader of the centre-left Women of Russia party, told the independent channel NTV. An expert on Russian President Boris Yeltsin's analytical centre agreed. "I think everything will be decided the last 10 days," Leonid Smirnyagin told the weekly magazine Novoye

Vremya. In the last election in December 1993, ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy won many votes in the final stages of campaigning, partly through his successful television campaign. The 43 parties seeking seats this year in the State Duma, or lower house, are resorting to different methods to try to win over the undecided voters. The usually calm and stately parliamentary speaker, Ivan Rybkin, who leads the centre-left Rybkin's Bloc, got up and danced the twist during an interview Sunday evening. Model Claudia Schiffer gave a boost to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's Our Home Is Russia at the weekend by appearing in a fashion show partly organised by the centre-right bloc. Mr. Zhirinovskiy appeared to be hoping to raise eyebrows when he said in an interview Friday that he sleeps naked. On Monday, Our Home's already familiar campaign tune was blaring out from radios and televisions at frequent intervals together with a host of other parties'

adverts pledging to tackle crime, economic problems and other woes. Many candidates are now travelling outside Moscow to complete campaigning in the provinces. One party which rarely features in the television campaign is the Communist Party. The Communists reject slick Western-style campaigning, and media analysts say they are concentrating on traditional Communist strongholds rather than winning over new voters. Their television campaign may not speed up even now. "International practice shows that in the last week parties must be more calm and measured. I think the Communists will be acting this way," said Anatoly Lukyanov, a top party leader. Meanwhile at Moscow University, only four elderly professors were reading the campaign posters displayed in the campus hall. Their students came and went with hardly a glance at the information, designed to help them vote in Russia's legislative election. Also overlooked is a poster with the warning: "young people — if you don't vote, others will vote for you."

Dudayev aide badly wounded

MOSCOW (R) — A top aide to Chechen separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev was badly wounded in an attack by an unidentified group and then arrested by Russian troops, ITAR-TASS news agency said Monday. Some members of the group accompanying Akhmed Zakayev on a journey through breakaway Chechnya were killed and others were wounded when unidentified attackers opened fire with rifles and grenade launchers, it added. Russian troops arrested Mr. Zakayev and took him and his surviving companions away from the scene. Earlier TASS said Mr. Zakayev, who holds the title of culture minister in Mr. Dudayev's rebel government and is a regular contact between the separatists and the media, was wounded and captured in an inci-

dent involving Russian troops. A later report, quoting a military news release broadcast on local television, said the incident happened late Sunday on the way to the settlement of Urus-Martan, not far from a Russian checkpoint. It was not possible to confirm the report immediately. Mr. Zakayev is one of the Chechen representatives at intermittent peace talks with the Moscow-installed local administration. Mr. Dudayev, who leads an independence movement that opposes the Russian forces who moved into the region exactly a year ago Monday, is hiding in the mountains. On Monday, thousands of Chechens defied the Russian military and staged a noisy protest Monday in their ruined capital, Grozny, on the first anniversary of

Moscow's bloody offensive against the breakaway province, witnesses said. Helicopter gunships swooped low over the crowd, drawing jeers from an otherwise good-humoured gathering that seemed content to chant anti-Russian slogans and offer Muslim prayers under the watchful gaze of Interior Ministry troops. "We'll stop the Russians. They've been trying to scare us for a year and it will never work," said Leyla Babayeva, 48, shaking her fist at the clattering helicopters as others yelled the Muslim cry "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest). Troops sealed off the city to prevent people coming in from the partly rebel-held countryside. The crowd, estimated by police at about 10,000, marched from the bombed-out Yuhileyniy (Juhilee)

Cinema, near the ruins of the presidential palace, to the headquarters of Moscow-appointed Chechen leader Doku Zavgayev. Mr. Zavgayev and Mr. Yeltsin, who launched the army against Mr. Dudayev's separatist administration on Dec. 11, 1994, were the main targets of the protesters. "For Yeltsin vodka, for Chechnya freedom," read one banner, waving among the green Chechen flags and pictures of Mr. Dudayev and guerrilla commander Shamil Basayev. "Zavgayev is a traitor," the crowd chanted. The demonstrators dispersed early in the afternoon. Journalists at the scene saw little sign of trouble, although some police tried to prevent photographers and camera crews from filming the gathering.

Russia's rights record worse in 1995 — activists

MOSCOW (R) — An official report to President Boris Yeltsin on Russia's human rights record in 1995 will reveal widespread and growing abuses and systematic violation of the country's two-year-old constitution by his own officials.

India denies claim of hostage capture

SRINAGAR, India (R) — There was confusion Monday over the fate of four Westerners held in Kashmir after a statement believed to be from Al-Faraj abductors said India had seized three of the hostages and a fourth was missing. But Indian officials in New Delhi and an army spokesman in Srinagar denied holding the tourists, and a spokesman for the government of the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir repeated an appeal to the captors to free their hostages taken in July. A handwritten statement similar to ones delivered by Al-Faraj and given to a newspaper in Srinagar said the army had seized the tourists after an encounter on Dec. 4 in which five guerrillas were killed. "At Dabrana (Anantnag district) three tourists were arrested by the army while the fourth is missing," the Al-Faraj statement said. The statement followed a suggestion Saturday by the Indian army, based on interrogation of three guerrillas arrested in the clash, that the hostages may have been abandoned or handed over to other guerrillas. Indian officials later contradicted the army statement and said Al-Faraj still held the hostages. Army spokesman Hariharan denied Monday that the army held the hostages. "It was not a rescue operation for tourists. It was a routine cordon and search operation in which five militants were killed, including an Al-Faraj leader," he told Reuters. "I am not aware of anyone arrested by the army," a state government spokesman told

Reuters in New Delhi. "The facts are that on the fourth of December there was an encounter, in which five militants were killed," he said. "The hostages were on Dec. 4 nowhere near the scene of action." Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, American Don Hutchings and German Dirk Hasert were picked up while trekking holidays in the state, scene of a bloody five-year-old separatist rebellion against New Delhi. A fifth, Norwegian Hans Christian Ostroe, was found beheaded on Aug. 13. The guerrillas have made repeated threats to kill the hostages. Al-Faraj wants India to release some 15 guerrillas, including three Pakistani nationals, held in Indian prisons. India says it will not release foreigners but can free Kashmiris as part of a routine review of their status. The state government spokesman said both Al-Faraj, and Harkat-ul-Ansar, another guerrilla group, had claimed that Abdul Hamid Turki, one of those killed in the Dec. 4 encounter, was a leader of their groups. He said this confirmed a belief among officials that the two groups were the same. Indian officials have said in the past Al-Faraj is a front for Harkat-ul-Ansar, an Islamic guerrilla group that functions from the third of Kashmir under Pakistani control. India controls the remaining two thirds. Harkat-ul-Ansar was involved in the kidnapping last year of two Britons, who were freed unharmed.

U.S. envoy blasts Congress over U.N. cuts

GENEVA (R) — A U.S. ambassador Monday blasted "the forces of isolation and reaction" in Congress for undermining the United Nations and said they had to be defeated if the United States were to remain a world leader. The envoy, Daniel L. Spiegel, told other ambassadors and top officials at the U.N.'s European headquarters that although reluctance to reform could endanger the world body, a main threat to its future came from U.S. "political elements". "There are now powerful forces in the United States which falsely view the United Nations as an enemy of my country's sovereignty," declared Mr. Spiegel, presenting to the U.N. busts of late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his wife. "They revel in their ignorance of what the U.N. actually does every day on behalf of all nations and peoples. They marginalise its successes. They distort its failures for their own political ends. "The forces of isolation and reaction, once on the

fringe of our political system, are growing more powerful as they reach the mainstream and populate the halls of our Congress... "It is not clear, however, that those who wish to weaken our role in the U.N. will be easily defeated. But defeated they must be, if the United States is to maintain its leadership role in a dangerous world." Listening to the address was U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali who himself expressed regret last week at the U.S. decision to pull out of the U.N.'s Vienna-based Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). Mr. Spiegel, a 50-year-old lawyer who served in the State Department from 1977-79 under Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and worked as an aide to Democratic Senators Hubert Humphrey and Alan Cranston, was appointed ambassador in Geneva by President Bill Clinton in 1993. He has made little secret of his fierce disagreement with Republicans now in control of Congress over their attitude to the U.N. and its agencies, many of which are based in Geneva and to whom he is accredited. But Monday's speech was seen as a signal of his strong concern that the refusal by Congress to pay some \$1.25 billion which Washington owes the U.N. could help destroy the world body that Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor helped found. "Unbeknownst to the vast majority of the American people, the isolationists in Congress are slashing U.N. budgets by staggering amounts, taking the organisation to the very brink of bankruptcy," Mr. Spiegel declared. "By reneging on our treaty obligations to pay our assessments to the U.N. and its specialised agencies, they hope to weaken the organisation's capabilities and force our withdrawal from the U.N. agencies. "By cutting voluntary contributions to the U.N., they weaken vital programmes and betray our reputation as a compassionate nation," the U.S. ambassador added.

Belarus elects first post-Soviet assembly

MINSK (R) — Belarus has elected its first fully-fledged post-Soviet parliament, disregarding hardline President Alexander Lukashenko's attempts to stifle the election campaign. Official results showed 59 deputies were elected Sunday in the final round of by-elections for 119 seats left empty because of invalid results in May's general election. That exceeded the 35 members needed to form a quorum in what had been an incapacitated assembly. Belarus had been the sole former Soviet republic still to elect a parliament after the fall of communism. "This a victory for democ-

racy. Thank you to our citizens for fulfilling their civic duty despite all the obstacles placed in their path," said Mechaslav Grib, chairman of the outgoing parliament who led opposition to Mr. Lukashenko. "Relations between the branches of power must be governed by the constitution. Let what happened before remain history." The new assembly in conservative Belarus will now have 198 of its 260 seats filled. It will be dominated by Communists and their Agrarian allies, who won at least 10 more seats in Sunday's voting and will hold a total of about 80 seats. There was no comment from Mr. Lukashenko's office. The president had threatened to introduce direct rule if no workable assembly was returned and vowed no more elections would be held for five years. He harried virtually all candidates from radio and television and allowed only a derisory amount to be spent on campaign expenses. Mr. Lukashenko, suffering from a heavy cold, turned up at his polling station late Sunday afternoon and was unusually laconic with reporters.

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Dialogue of nations

THE ARAB-Austrian seminar which was organised by the Arab Thought Forum (ATF) in Amman earlier this week represents another important step by the ATF to encourage dialogue between the Arabs and other nations of the world. The importance of this dialogue need not be overemphasised in a world which is becoming increasingly, and assertively, characterised by inter-dependence in economic, political and other fields.

The emergence of a global economy and the telecommunications revolution, among others, have brought down many of the borders that used to isolate countries — and regions — from each other. That no country is an island is a concept that stood true when it was first formulated hundreds of years ago. It is so true now that no single region can be an island. Ours is a time of regional blocs.

The Europeans have understood the new spirit of the times better and much more quickly than us Arabs. Their more developed political and economic institutions have helped them to respond to the requirements of the times by forming the European Union, which aims to unite the European nations around shared political, cultural and economic concerns. Such knowledge probably made the job of the Arab participants at the seminar easier. The Arabs are dealing with a member of a bloc whose policies are governed by a well-defined set of priorities and principles. Austria has become a member of the European Union and a part of a region that acts collectively to protect and promote its interests. We thus could not have had any illusions about where Austria is heading, enabling us to formulate long-term policies towards it.

The same could not be said about the Austrian participants in the seminar. The Arab World remains a vague term that is hard to define in the new language of political and economic regionalism. Inter-regional cooperation is minimal, and no framework for future integration is articulated. The concept of an Arab World acting under a regional umbrella like that of the European Union is losing ground to the goal of achieving a Middle East region. But no final conceptualisation of a Middle Eastern bloc has been drawn in light of the changing political environment within which it will be created. Uncertainties about the future of the Arab World thus make the formulation of long-term policies towards it risky, the consideration of treating its members within the framework of one policy not possible.

The ATF is right to engage the Europeans in dialogues that will help create mutual understanding of the forces that shape those two areas of the world. But the forum should press ahead with efforts to launch parallel inter-regional dialogue that could accelerate the process of regional cooperation through emphasising the disadvantage at which the Arabs stand when they deal with others. Such efforts will not be a luxury. Arab thinkers and intellectuals need to tell decision-makers, and their own people, where they might be heading.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARY

CONTRARY to what the government has been saying, the rate of exchange of the Jordanian dinar is continually sliding against the U.S. dollar, while the Jordanian people are feeling the pinch in view of the rising prices of basic commodities, said Bassam Ernouh, a columnist in Al Rai daily Monday. While in the late 1980s the Jordanian dinar was worth nearly three dollars, its value is dropping gradually to be equal to one dollar, with the result that poverty is spreading, especially among the limited-income groups, according to the writer, who is also a Parliament member. Warning that the situation is very dangerous in view of the continued rise in prices and the increase in the taxes, especially the sales tax, the writer said that as a deputy he was continually bombarded by complaints from people in his district asking that Parliament and the government take steps to stop this deterioration. Citing the current prices of dairy products and comparing them with the pre-1993 prices, the writer said the increase in prices together with reported plans on the part of the government to hike the prices of bread and fuel, are causing increased concern to the public. Referring to the promised cost of living allowance to the employees, the writer said that the promised JD 10 monthly allowance will not outweigh the increase of basic commodities that occurred in the past two years or the expected increases in the coming months. He demanded that the government take appropriate steps to halt the trend in price increases rather than offer meagre allowance to its employees.

A writer in Al Dustour welcomed reports about meetings between the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the Hamas opposition group, saying that agreement to end the differences between the two sides is bound to benefit all Palestinians. Saleh Qallah referred to a meeting between the PNA President Yasser Arafat and Hamas leader Mahmoud Al Zahar, saying this has paved the way for a dialogue between their groups to be held in Cairo soon. The emergence of such groups as the Islamic Union and the National Salvation Party, which announced their desire to participate in next month's parliamentary elections, is a clear indication that reconciliation between the PNA and Hamas is forthcoming.

The View from Fourth Circle

The rich and powerful, corruption and the shrill trumpets of our vulnerability

IT IS striking how often the question of alleged corruption, influence-peddling and excessive exploitation by the private sector in Jordan come up these days in people's conversations and in press articles. This is a telling phenomenon that should not be dismissed as merely the manifestation of jealousy or mean politics by some in society. History and human nature both indicate that corruption thrives during moments of political and economic transition such as we are experiencing in Jordan — especially transitions from centrally controlled to market economies, and from patriarchal to participatory political systems.

This is a central question that Jordan and other transforming societies must deal with quickly and firmly — if we are to avoid slipping into the abyss of rampant corruption, privilege, inefficiency and distortion that has transformed great lands like Egypt, Algeria and Russia from citadels of human civilisation to maelstroms of vulgar personal enrichment and endemic violence. This problem can destroy economic and democratic systems, ultimately leaving once proud and viable countries as pitiful, plundered wrecks, arenas of chaos ruled by militias and mafias, or sad, lifeless carcasses only accommodating to vultures and worms.

The opportunities for widespread corruption and influence peddling are expanding swiftly in Jordan, due to openings created by the government's liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation of the economy. This is not particularly a comment on Jordan, because we necessarily do or do not have more crooks than other countries; it is rather a comment on the nature of economic transformation. Whatever we do, we should not merely dismiss or ignore the issue. Even if it is very small scale today, corruption must be nipped in the bud, or else it will take advantage of today's very fertile soil for growth.

Do not take my word for it, if you distrust my line of thinking, but rather listen to what the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — our new quasi-patron — has to say. In a recent study on the impact of corruption on economic performance, the IMF made the following points:

Corruption tends to grow over time; individuals who occasionally only bend the rules soon find it easy to break them over and over again, and individuals who obey the law soon become tempted to join the corrupt crowd.

Corruption tends to be worst when relations among individuals are personalised and state bureaucracies are pervasive.

The main instruments for corruption are regulations to issue licenses and permits, fines for violations of laws and regulations, and controls over public spending (especially awarding contracts), hiring and promoting people, and

access to subsidised public services.

Unchecked corruption distorts the normal operation of economic markets, transfers power and authority from the state to unaccountable private individuals, lowers the quality of public decision-making, and discourages the most able individuals from entering public service (which in turn further promotes long-term mediocrity and institutionalised corruption).

The process of reducing the state's role in the economy via privatisation or price deregulation "can produce enormous opportunities for bureaucratic corruption during the transition, when the institutions necessary to limit it have not been developed, while the habits developed in the previous period may not have changed."

A society has to fight corruption by using culturally relevant approaches, and the most feasible way to reduce corruption is to scale down the government's role in the economy, especially in the fields of spending, taxing and regulating.

We in Jordan and other Arab lands should accept that most of these factors, danger signs and potential threats apply to our societies, and in some cases they fit like a glove. It is already very evident — for those who care to listen to the messages coming out of our own society — that we suffer an increasing amount of resentment among ordinary people. That resentment is largely due to the perception — perhaps wrong, but a real perception nevertheless — that rich and powerful people are enjoying special privileges that bring them new wealth and power.

The resentment takes four primary forms: by people everywhere against the rich and powerful in Amman; by Jordanians against foreigners, especially against Israelis, the World Bank, the United Nations, and the IMF; by ordinary people against the private sector; and by ordinary people against the government. These are uncomfortable, and for Jordan, unusual resentments. Our modern history of nation-building has been successful primarily because national growth also always meant a relatively equitable sharing of the newfound wealth. Resentment is not a deeply engrained political, social or economic tradition in Jordan; but it is quickly coming to the surface in its different manifestations, because a growing number of Jordanians now sense that economic expansion is no longer equitable. Many — perhaps most — Jordanians now resent the manner in which economic privatisation is also expanding opportunities for the rich and powerful to become even richer and more powerful.

What do we do about this situation while it is still relatively modest and manageable? I have several suggestions.

1. We have to find out why people talk about corruption and influence peddling so much these days, in order to

identify the root causes of people's resentment. Have some privileges, concessions or licenses been awarded in an unfair manner? Is this deemed corruption or is this culturally acceptable? We need to find out, not to run and hide. There is no shame in honesty. Only the corrupt and the crooked have something to hide.

2. Having identified the root causes of people's grievances, we have to tackle them quickly and effectively through our existing institutions, or through new means if our existing institutions are unable to do the job.

3. To minimise the perception that rich and powerful people use their influence and family connections to gain economic advantages, we have to devise more transparent and equitable systems by which contracts and licenses are awarded to the private sector.

4. The whole issue of privatisation has to be submitted to a credible national process of political and cultural debate that allows for the formation of a national consensus. It is criminally negligent of us as a country and a society to promote privatisation as a means of economic salvation while in fact the process of privatisation may be emerging as one of the most serious causes of corrosive economic alienation, political resentment and social embitterment.

We only have to look to places like Russia, Egypt, and Mexico to see what happens when traditionally authoritarian, paternalistic, patriarchal or autocratic systems suddenly liberalise, pull back, and give the private sector a leading role in national economic growth. Such lands endure a fate of three sadnesses: a pathetic pattern of political falsification, appropriation and violence; a rapid economic plunge into sustained and epic banditry; and a slow expansion in the numbers and despair of the poor, while traditional social solidarity succumbs to deep communal cultural lacerations and personal economic greed and desperation.

This is the worst scenario — but it is a real scenario that has come true in many countries around the world. It is not a scenario that suddenly ambushes innocent societies. Rather, it announces itself well-ahead of time, in the form of several different but equally clear early warning signs: financial stress at family level, deviant or criminal behaviour by individuals, widening socio-economic disparities, and — the trumpets are straining full blast on this one — growing resentment by ordinary people against the rich and powerful.

It is possible that ordinary people's perceptions of corruption and personal enrichment at the expense of the public good are wrong or exaggerated. It is very possible. It is also possible that we have a major problem here. We would be doubly criminally negligent to wait for history to deliver the verdict, while the shrill blast of the warning trumpets tries to nudge us into action.

Yugoslav crisis created post-cold war role for NATO

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

LONDON — NATO, Russian move into former Yugoslavia... U.S. troops pour into Hungary... German forces in action abroad... Switzerland and Sweden offer help to Western efforts...

Anyone who had been asleep for the past five years and woken to see today's headlines might think that someone was playing a practical joke or that world war three had begun.

The Yugoslav conflict, Europe's worst in half a century, has caused untold misery — but it had also redrawn the diplomatic and security map in ways that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, even with the end of the cold war.

Providing the Balkan peace agreement to be signed this week in Paris holds, the four-year-old conflict will be over.

The changes wrought in the world beyond will last well into the next millennium. Although the United States, Russia and other European countries have argued bitterly over how to end the war, new precedents have been set and old taboos broken.

Five years ago, a European summit in Paris proclaimed the end of the cold war and a new era of peaceful co-existence. U.S.

Soviet cooperation during the 1991 Gulf war against Iraq and plans for closer European integration through the Maastricht Treaty seemed to confirm that a new golden age had arrived.

Since then, the breakup of the Soviet Union, economic troubles in Europe, the failure to end the Balkan war swiftly and a realisation that the Gulf war was an exception rather than a precedent have tarnished those hopes.

Nevertheless, the Yugoslav war has proved to be a catalyst for breathtaking change.

"Without this crisis, I doubt whether you would have seen a whole host of things — NATO operating beyond its borders, greater German military commitment, changes by the French, cooperation with the Russians — for years to come, if at all," said a senior European diplomat.

The point has been illustrated graphically in the past week.

France, frustrated by European impotence in former Yugoslavia, announced that it would return to closer military links with the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation after almost 30 years of keeping a cool distance.

It marked a recognition that, for the time being at least, Europe has nothing to match U.S. diplomatic and military power.

At the same time, Ger-

many moved ever closer to lifting the historical taboo on military involvement abroad, aware that a country of its size and power could no longer afford to take a back seat in international peacekeeping.

German army officers taking part in a NATO-led force to implement the Yugoslav peace agreement left for Bosnia last Thursday, the first ground troops to be sent on a potential combat mission abroad since the end of World War II.

While Germany was divided, West Germany's forces were limited to the defence of NATO territory. No longer.

Although German troops in former Yugoslavia will be limited largely to a supporting role, their presence is particularly significant because of sensitivities related to the Nazi invasion and occupation of Yugoslavia during World War II.

For NATO, leading a 60,000-strong force into Bosnia marks an even bigger change.

The 16-nation Western alliance, which never fired a shot in anger during the cold war, is mounting its biggest operation in support of peace — and beyond its borders.

After the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, conventional wisdom at NATO headquarters in Brussels was that such "out of area" missions were an unlikely prospect for a defensive alliance.

NATO gradually became involved in former Yugoslavia from 1992 onwards, giving air cover to U.N. peacekeepers on the ground and flying combat patrols to enforce a U.N. ban on military flights over Bosnia.

As the line between traditional peacekeeping and enforcement became uncomfortably blurred, NATO used its might in air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs and effectively set itself up as the "enforcement arm" of the international community in Europe.

Russia complained, highly suspicious of its former foe. But Moscow has now signed cooperation agreements with the alliance and will send a contingent to work alongside NATO in Bosnia.

Other countries — including Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic — have used the conflict to further their bids for membership of the Western alliance and the European Union.

They are sending troops to work under NATO command and Hungary, once a communist member of the Warsaw Pact, is allowing U.S. troops and equipment to use its territory as the main staging post for the Bosnia operation.

Sweden, which claimed steadfast neutrality during decades of East-West confrontation, is also contributing to the NATO-led force.

Slow European integration to help ease social disruption

By Ethan B. Kapstein

PARIS — The disruptive strike by France's public-sector unions stems from the government's plan to halve the budget deficit and scale back the national health and social security systems.

But much more is at issue. The protest is also about the future of Europe and the state of democracy in France.

The government announced huge changes in social policy a few weeks after President Jacques Chirac met with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany in October.

Mr. Chirac apparently told Mr. Kohl that if France wanted to join Germany in the first stage of the European currency union in 1998, it must cut its deficit (about \$59 billion this year), which has exploded because of low growth and because ever fewer workers are supporting more retirees.

In the United States, big changes in social policy would be unthinkable without debate. But French politics, ruled by a tiny elite, represents arrogance at its worst.

The government, thinking it knows better than the people, makes decisions without consulting them. The National Assembly, a rubber stamp. Deprived of debate, the French take to the streets.

Mr. Chirac may be cor-

rect about the need to force through the reforms. Since he controls the assembly, he may have thought that doing so would be painless. But the issues should have been debated.

The French, like most Europeans, are coddled from cradle to grave. Most people understand that the welfare system needs changes, but they ask, "Who will lose?"

Certainly not the rich. Most people, especially union members, say, "We will."

Fearing a plunge in living standards, the French question their government and its European ambitions. If a monetary union and a single market mean a declining quality of life, why go forward?

To them, Mr. Chirac's answer — that life will be even worse if the French do not accept austerity today — is intolerable.

The government defines its dilemma this way: should it proceed with European Union, swallowing short-run costs for long-term benefits? Or should it satisfy voters today at the cost of the single market? That's a false choice. The deeper issue is the timing of integration.

The writer, director of studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, contributed this comment to The New York Times.

A messy leadership fight in Japan

By Paul Eckert
Reuters

TOKYO — Two former prime ministers and a vacuous powerbroker are locked in battle for leadership of Japan's main opposition party, in a contest that could galvanise the party for national polls — or cause a fatal split.

The Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) showdown could determine Japan's next prime minister — if the reformist group fares well enough in general polls to oust the coalition dominated by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

But a messy fight among party stalwarts could expose factional fault lines in

Shinshinto, virtually ensuring a conservative LDP government for the rest of the decade.

The contest pits current leader Toshiki Kaifu, a former LDP prime minister, against another ex-prime minister, Tsutomu Hata, and Shinshinto strategist Ichiro Ozawa.

All three men scrapped successful careers with the LDP to join forces with an amorphous opposition grouping which they forged into Shinshinto last December.

Although close political allies, each has such sharply contrasting styles and tactics that observers predict rancour no matter what the outcome.

"There's a good chance that the Shinshinto will split," said veteran political commentator Masaya Ito.

He said some party members unhappy with the outcome of the Dec. 16-26 election might even rejoin the LDP.

Mr. Kaifu has a reputation for probity and strong oratorical skills, but has been criticised as an ineffectual leader during his 1989-91 tenure as prime minister and in a year at the helm of Shinshinto.

The affable Hata, who headed a fragile minority government for two months in 1994, made his name as a champion of political reform despite his meteoric career in the most corrupt faction of the LDP.

Mr. Hata ally Mr. Ozawa, the politician many Japanese love to hate, is blunt, assertive and seemingly unafraid of making enemies — characteristics seldom seen in his country's politics.

Mr. Ozawa's 1993 book, "Blueprint for a New Japan," set sales records for political books in Japan and drew attention overseas for its calls for a more assertive Japanese foreign policy and greater efforts by Tokyo to cut trade barriers.

Although the reform plans outlined in his book underpin the basic policy platform of Shinshinto, Mr. Ozawa has preferred to work behind the scenes and until this week resisted

seeking the party's top post. "The only thing on my mind is winning the next general election," Mr. Ozawa told reporters. "Anyone can be party head."

But conceding to supporters' demands, Mr. Ozawa agreed on Friday to seek the presidency on the condition backers endorse his policy prescriptions, which include a sweeping overhaul of the tax system and a reduction of Japan's powerful bureaucracy.

Political analyst Minoru Morita said the basic policy would be similar whatever the election outcome, leaving a choice of leadership style between Mr. Ozawa's strong-arm methods and the consensus-building

ways of Mr. Kaifu and Mr. Hata.

"The question is which style of leadership best matches the problems Japan faces," said Mr. Morita.

Breaking with the strict membership rules practised by other Japanese political parties, Shinshinto has opened its presidential election to anyone aged 18 or older who is willing to pay a 1,000 yen (\$10) registration fee.

General elections do not have to be held until mid-1997, but Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama is widely expected to call them after next year's budget is passed by the end of March.



Smokescreen: Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's campaign advertisements exude confidence, but his star is waning

Struggling Zhirinovskiy tries sex appeal

By Helen Womack

MOSCOW — Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, at risk of being eclipsed by a new generation of Russian hard-liners, appears to be getting desperate. He may still be a bogeyman in the West for his nationalism and nuclear sabre-rattling, but he looks as if he is losing his power to shock and fascinate at home. So he is resorting to sex appeal and mudslinging to the hope of attracting votes in this month's Duma elections.

The lesson of the last such poll in 1993 was clear: never make any predictions about Russian politics. Then, Mr. Zhirinovskiy, widely dismissed as a nutcase, swept in and grabbed the largest block of seats in parliament. Not one of the pundits saw him coming. Mindful of how he will jeer at them if they turn out to be wrong again, analysts are being very cautious about dismissing Mr. Zhirinovskiy this time. But all the signs are that his star is waning as the resurgent Communists look poised to win the protest votes he took in 1993.

Aud General Alexander Lebed, whose voice booms like a cannon compared with Mr. Zhirinovskiy's aogry rasp, has now emerged to compete with him for the patriotic constituency.

The latest opinion poll, published by Sevodnya newspaper this week, showed the Communists out in front with an expected 12 per cent of the

Russian elections: The man who dominated the last poll for the Duma has lost the power to shock

vote, followed by two different groups of economic reformers and the Women of Russia. Only then did Mr. Zhirinovskiy's misleadingly named Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) feature with a predicted 4 per cent. He was sharing the expected nationalist vote with General Lebed, right behind with 3 per cent.

Opinion polls are worth little here, of course. More indicative of Mr. Zhirinovskiy's shaky position are his own campaign tactics.

While others are more or less addressing the issues in their television adverts — General Lebed's show prison bars crashing down on a bribe-taking bureaucrat — the LDPR leader has resorted to sex in an attempt to arouse the voters. "He is going for the lumpen vote," commented Michael McFaul at the Moscow Centre for the Carnegie Endowment for Peace.

The clip shows a middle-aged man in bed with his wife, hair in curlers. "Who are you going to vote for, Dusa?" asks the husband. "For him, of course," she purrs. "All the others are just too awful." Perhaps the jokey advert could be interpreted as an expression of Mr. Zhirinovskiy's supreme confidence, that he believes he is so well-known he does

not need to repeat his promises of making the world tremble before Great Russia. But his vicious verbal attack on President Boris Yeltsin this week suggests something closer to panic.

Mr. Zhirinovskiy may have abused his domestic opponents and democratic politicians around the world, but he has been careful to be rude about the Kremlin leader, especially during the president's two bouts of heart disease this year. Last week, however, he broke his own rule and appeared on television, ridiculing Mr. Yeltsin in a manner which could backfire. For many Russians, though critical of their president, dislike seeing a man being kicked when he is down.

Mr. Yeltsin was like Leonid Brezhnev at the end of his life, sneered Mr. Zhirinovskiy. "He is a puppet. They bring him in and out." The LDPR leader then went on to claim the credit for giving the Russian leader heart failure. "He was laid up in the Kremlin in July after talking to me. I said, 'Boris Nikolayevich, the country's in a mess, the factories are at a standstill, the people are hungry, sick and dying.' He turned dark red, and then all green, and

fell ill."

Mr. Zhirinovskiy was quite different when he first appeared on the political scene back in 1990. It was perhaps suspicious that a man who had been declared persona non grata in Turkey in the 1970s should be the first to set up an independent party after the Communists renounced their monopoly on power. But he came across then as a liberal in the Western sense of the word.

In the 1991 presidential election, which Mr. Yeltsin won, Mr. Zhirinovskiy did surprisingly well by promising the voters free vodka. Only in the parliamentary elections two years ago did his totalitarian tendencies and imperial ambitions become unmistakable, with his promise that Russian soldiers would "wash their boots in the Indian Ocean" while foreign objects would risk nuclear attack and domestic dissidents be sent by cattle truck to the Arctic Circle.

Many Russians, disgruntled with economic reform, sent a warning to Mr. Yeltsin by voting for Mr. Zhirinovskiy in 1993. But this time they see the stakes are too high and will choose the more sober Communists.

The Independent

Iran says U.S. firms only losers from sanctions

By William MacLean
Reuter

TEHRAN — The 1970s Buick crawled along traffic-clogged streets beneath huge wall paintings of Iran's Islamic leaders.

"Too many cars in Tehran. So many people," sighed the civil servant at the wheel.

At times it can take hours to drive across the Iranian capital, a smoky megalopolis of more than 10 million people that lies in the shadow of snow-sprinkled mountains.

The woes of Tehran's motorists help explain why foreigners still flock to the Islamic Republic to do business despite its troubled economy and the threat of tighter U.S. trade sanctions.

Iran is the Gulf's most populous country and number two oil exporter, with a consumer market larger than all other Gulf states put together. The fast-growing population of more than 60 million has nearly doubled since the 1979 revolution which overthrew the Shah.

Iranian officials say U.S. sanctions will not halt its economic development because no foreign trade partner can afford to ignore the Gulf's largest market, especially one situated strategically next door to industrialising Central Asia.

So attractive is Iran's economic potential that even major American multinationals are willing to flout sanctions in order to get a

slice of the action, Iranian officials say.

And Iran is perfectly willing to do business with them, provided U.S. firms use their political influence to persuade their government to lift the curbs, they say.

"Many American companies are contacting us and trying to have a relationship," Deputy Oil Minister Ahmad Rahgozar told Reuters.

"We are always advising them to go to their government and sort out the problems with their politicians first."

"It is American politicians who are banning the economic relationship. It is not the Iranian government," he said.

"So once they decide to lift this ban, then the ground is prepared to have an economic relationship with them."

Washington in June handed trade between American companies and Iran in retaliation for Iranian opposition to the Middle East peace process and an alleged widespread Iranian threat to U.S. interests globally. Iran rejects the charges.

The move caused a damaging slump in the rial that scrambled Iran's efforts to settle its big foreign debt, slowed efforts to put the state-dominated economy on a more commercial footing and led to austerity policies that slowed much business activity.

Some Tehran analysts see

the sanctions partly as a personal vendetta by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, still smarting over the 444-day detention of 52 American diplomats and servicemen seized at the U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979.

Mr. Christopher, then an official of President Jimmy Carter's administration, was involved in talks leading to their release in 1981. Ties between Tehran and Washington have been hostile ever since.

Now, Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato has sponsored a bill that would block non-U.S. companies that do oil or gas-related business with Iran from bidding for U.S. government contracts.

Mr. Rahgozar said American companies in contact with Iran opposed Washington's sanctions policy.

Officials also express weary irritation at what they call hostile propaganda by American and other Western politicians and say it stands no chance of weakening the Islamic government.

Mr. Rahgozar is president of state-owned National Petrochemical Company, which this year offered partial foreign ownership in \$3.3 billion worth of new projects.

A successful agreement would mark the first time parts of the state-owned oil and related sectors have been opened to foreign ownership since the revolution.

The company is negotiating joint venture arrangements with European and Asian partners.

"They (Iran) are willing to open up and deal with the rest of the world. That's quite a major concession... Everyone could benefit from cooperation," said Jamil Wakim, a petrochemical consultant at America's Stanford Research Institute.

A big U.S. chemical company with a major presence in the Gulf had been in talks with Iran earlier this year on a direct stake in the programme, but the imposition of the curbs had halted discussions, Mr. Rahgozar said. Both Mr. Rahgozar and the other sources declined to name the firm.

Mr. Rahgozar was confident foreign banks and governments would continue to provide loans and export credit guarantees.

"Iran is prepared, and has always been prepared, to have an economic relationship with economic and trade centres and institutions in the U.S.," Mr. Rahgozar said.

"Even before the Islamic revolution, while far late leader the Imam (Ayatollah Ruhollah) Khomeini was in Paris, he clearly declared that we are not going to cut our economic relations with the U.S."

"We consider the United States a major centre for science and technology and naturally we are interested in technology and commercial relations with the U.S."

Tamil Tiger rebels prowl east for easy recruits

By Moses Manoharan

Reuter

KOKKADICHOLAI, Sri Lanka — In a small hamlet on Sri Lanka's east coast, Tamil Tiger rebels on the prowl for easy recruits find easy prey among the women and the young.

Around 75 including 20 girls have joined the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the past few months from the hamlet, where 700 families live by tilling the surrounding flatlands.

Eighteen-year-old Tavamalar's case is typical. Tavamalar was a high school student until seven weeks ago when she was seen leaving the hamlet with some female rebels.

"She told us she was going to visit the nearby town," says Alagamma, the sister who looked after her when their father was killed in the war three years ago. Her mother died shortly afterwards.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in the war in which the rebels are fighting to establish a homeland in the north and east of the island for Sri Lanka's minority Tamils.

Tavamalar's brother says the family went in search of her, but were turned back at a rebel training camp at the edge of the hamlet, across a lagoon from Batticaloa town in east Sri Lanka.

She is among hundreds the LTTE has recruited to regain control of the north after an army offensive that ended on Tuesday with the hoisting of the Sri Lankan flag above Jaffna.

As the army prepared to take Jaffna, heart of the Tamil dream home, youths like Thiruchelvam, 16, turned to the LTTE.

But Thiruchelvam's family was luckier than Tavamalar's. The family had better claims on the boy because his brother had already

joined the LTTE.

"When my elder brother was killed in the fighting three months ago, I ran away to join but they returned me to my family," Thiruchelvam says with disappointment.

The LTTE has a policy of taking only one member from a family to curb resentment. The families themselves are cautious in stating their views on the LTTE's recruiting methods.

One area of difficulty is the disruption of education, which is traditionally prized by the Tamil community as a way to overcome what it believes is discrimination by the Sinhalese majority.

The hamlet has never had electricity and the war aborted a bid to extend power lines from across the lagoon.

Yet parents take pride in recounting the number of children who have studied by lamplight, disregarding the sporadic artillery bom-

hardment at night, to gain college places.

"We are older and know the world, but youngsters are easier to persuade to take up arms," says a village elder, as he vainly tries to tell the LTTE in the main square to lower the volume of a record player blaring rebel martial music.

"We are afraid the music can be heard by planes overflying our village, but these hot-headed youths won't listen," he says.

The arrival of the plane usually around evening is watched with concern by the villagers, craning their necks to see where it will begin its bombing drive.

It avoids civilian areas to concentrate on the hamlet's outskirts, where the LTTE camp is located, the villagers say.

They also live in fear of the troops suddenly crossing the lagoon and entering their hamlet in pursuit of the rebels.

King's Saudi visit to be soon

(Continued from page 1)

cabinet meeting in his half-brother's absence.

"We call upon Him to keep the king in good shape and good health," the crown prince said, adding that the results of medical tests King

Fahd undertook last week had been "reassuring."

The king left hospital on Thursday after falling ill the previous week, but he is under doctors' orders to rest. A palace statement said he had recovered from an undisclosed illness brought on by overwork.

Clinton reports Syrian pledge

(Continued from page 1)

with Syria.

"We do not want to set pre-conditions for the peace talks with Syria. The extent of our withdrawal from the Golan will depend on the scope of peace and the quality of security arrangements," he told journalists.

"All we want is to be able to prevent three possibilities: a surprise attack, a generalised conflict, or incidents," Mr. Barak said after a meeting of the parliamentary foreign affairs and defence committee.

He said the peace talks should run simultaneously on four tracks: withdrawal, normalisation, the sharing of water resources and security arrangements in case of an Israeli pullout from the Golan.

It will take "two or three weeks to know if a serious dialogue can be started with Syria," said Mr. Barak, referring to Mr. Christopher's next shuttle mission.

Housing Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer announced Monday that Israel was to build another 100 homes for Jewish settlers on the Golan Heights which Syria wants back in exchange for peace.

About 13,000 Jewish settlers live on the strategic heights.

Syria repeated its insistence on that Israel must with-

draw from the Golan to the lines drawn just before the 1967 Middle East war if it wants peace.

"The state of war will only end when its after-effects have been eliminated," a senior official told AFP, referring to a total withdrawal from the Golan, South Lebanon and the Palestinian territories.

"Israel had annexed even before 1967 militarised areas between the Syrian and Israeli lines, despite multiple U.N. condemnations."

On Sunday Israeli Chief of Staff Amnon Shahak said: "It's undeniable that in case of war the Golan has a very high strategic value," adding that no amount of weaponry could replace it.

The Syrian official asked what claim Israel had to the international borders drawn in 1923 under the French and British mandates when the Jewish state did not exist and to which "it cannot claim any heritage."

A withdrawal to the 1967 lines would give several kilometres of land more to the Syrians, bringing the border between the two countries much closer to the edges of the Sea of Galilee.

The government daily Tishrin said it was "not up to Israel to draw up the borders of Syria."

Israel is to build another 100 homes on the Golan, officials said.

Juppe seeks

(Continued from page 1)

Viannet, met Mr. Juppe and commented afterwards there was "total disagreement" and "no way out of the crisis for the moment."

Marc Blondel, leader of the independent Force Ouvriere, the other main union in the forefront of the conflict, was less categorical, but called for "global negotiations."

In an editorial, the daily Le Monde said the negotiations were Mr. Juppe's "last chance" and that if he failed, President Jacques Chirac would have to replace him.

But Mr. Juppe's concessions were too much for the markets, which made gains last week in the belief the prime minister would be able to tough it out over his plans to cut the 230 billion franc (\$46 billion) social security deficit and restructure the railways, which have an accumulated debt of 175 billion francs (\$35 billion).

The Paris bourse opened with a fall of 1.01 per cent, but recovered, closing with a loss of 0.36 per cent on the CAC 40 index at 1,849.59 points. In London, the franc stood at 3.4582 to the mark in early afternoon, down from 3.4442 Friday.

Assassin says rabbis backed him

(Continued from page 1)

surrounded by two guards. Once they had passed a tree, I walked rapidly towards him and took out my gun."

"I shot him in the back, aiming for the centre. I saw the flash and the prime minister was thrust forward as if he received a blow. At such a distance, it is necessary to be very accurate."

"I dropped my gun. They arrested me and took me to the police, who were very

Pullout ahead of schedule

(Continued from page 1)

district liaison office. Nablus has stood out as a flashpoint in what has so far been a relatively smooth withdrawal over the last few weeks.

A 23-year-old Palestinian has been killed and more than 25 others injured over the last several days in Nablus, as they threw stones and broken bottles at Israeli troops, who responded by firing rubber and real bullets as well as tear gas.

At least three Israeli soldiers have been injured in the exchanges, including one

Stateless Arabs fear for their future in Kuwait

(Continued from page 1)

seriously. The PLO is now in full control in the northern West Bank towns of Jenin and Tulkarm and has first contingents of forces in Kalkiya, Bethlehem, Nablus, and Ramallah.

Palestinian officials said on Sunday, Israel and the PLO agreed to construct a railway which would link Palestinian self-rule Gaza with Egypt and Israel's Ashdod port.

The announcement was made after a meeting in Gaza between senior Israeli negotiator Major-General Oren Shohar and PLO official Nabil Shaath, in charge of plan-

ning for the PNA.

"Both sides agreed to make a railway along the Gaza Strip to be connected later with Egypt in the south and to Ashdod in the north," said Dr. Shaath's spokesman Mohammad Waheidi.

He said the project was expected to cost \$200 million and preliminary work on it would begin this month.

"Both sides also agreed to build a 40-kilometre long bridge between Gaza and the Hebron area," Mr. Waheidi said.

He said the bridge, which would link Palestinian-ruled areas over Israeli territory, would provide for Israeli security needs.



Residents of Hebron welcome Palestinian policemen who arrived here on Sunday as a vanguard unit ahead of taking control of the West Bank town next year (AFP photo)

in charge of East Jerusalem, Faisal Hussein, as well as attack Palestinian police, according to the police statements printed by Yediot Aharonot.

Hagai Amir, 27, is accused of helping his brother, 25, prepare the attack against Mr. Rabin by providing him with the bullets that killed the prime minister.

"Yigal and I had plans to kill Faisal Hussein and Yasser Arafat, either by attacking his helicopter or setting

op a fake army barricade," Hagai told police.

"We would disguise ourselves as soldiers and stop them to check their identification and then shoot them," Hagai told investigators.

"We also planned attacks against Palestinian police," he said. "Although I supported his plan to kill Rabin, I was certain my brother would never be able to do it, and I made fun of him when he failed on two occasions."

Stateless Arabs fear for their future in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP)

More than 100,000 stateless Arabs in Kuwait fear what 1996 will have to store after the government announced a year-long grace period for them to satisfy its terms for citizenship.

Some of the stateless Arabs known as the bedouin will be naturalised on a legal basis while others will face unspecified sanctions, which they fear could mean expulsion from their native land.

"We are scared to hope for too much and then be disappointed," said a young bedouin, who like several others asked not to be named.

"I was born here, I've always lived in Kuwait and have no other country," said a 28-year-old. He noted the government had yet to carry out its pledge to grant citizenship to sons of "martyrs" who died during the Iraqi occupation.

Another bedouin complained that the government's only criterion was a 1965 census rather than "loyalty to Kuwait." Many bedouin had shown far more loyalty than full-blooded Kuwaitis, he argued.

Since the Gulf war which ended seven months of Iraqi occupation in February 1991, the government has repeatedly said the status of the bedouin would be decided on the basis of their loyalty.

Some of them were members of the Kuwait resistance while others were jailed for collaborating with the Iraqis. The government said on Wednesday it would give the bedouin up to a year to settle their legal status after which they would be subjected to legal sanctions.

Al Watan newspaper, citing a government source, said

between 10,000 and 20,000 could be naturalised under the planned changes, while another 50,000 would be granted resident permits.

Kuwait officially has a population of 1.8 million, only one-third of them nationals, between 117,000 and 127,000 bedouin, and the rest foreign labourers and maids, mostly from Asia.

The government says the stateless Arabs are offspring of bedouins who refused or were denied nationality when Kuwait gained independence from Britain in 1961.

But international human rights groups accuse the authorities of discriminating against the bedouins, noting they are denied free medical care, education and other citizens' rights.

The bedouin, which the U.S. group Human Rights Watch estimates number between 150,000 and 180,000, have been excluded from the army since 1993 and complain about being kept out of the civil service.

Human Rights Watch says the discrimination is aimed at forcing them to quit the emirate, like the thousands who were expelled to Iraq after the occupation.

Deputy Talal Said, a representative for the tribes of Kuwait, bas, however, welcomed the government's decision to finally set up a legal context within which the bedouin can apply for citizenship.

Bedouin with blood ties to full Kuwaitis and those who refused citizenship in the past should be first in line for naturalisation, he said. It should also be granted to 10,000 women married to Kuwaitis.

Palestinian business leaders seek market economy

NABLUS, West Bank (AFP) — Palestinian business leaders are sending a clear signal to their future government that it should adhere to free market principles and create an efficient bureaucracy conducive to private investment.

"Unless you have stability, investment law and a free movement of goods and people, you are going to have trouble attracting people from the outside," warned Ibrahim Abdul Hadi, managing director of the Arab Insurance Establishment Company, headquartered in the West Bank town of Nablus.

Mr. Abdul Hadi is also

chairman of the newly-created Palestine Business Association, whose goal is to give the business community a voice in the development of economic policy by the Palestinian leadership.

"The business community is suffering a lot from every side," said Mr. Abdul Hadi, who is part of an effort to establish a Palestinian stock market in Nablus by April or May. "I think it is time to try to defend the community."

A self-rule government is to be formed after historic first general elections on Jan. 20 as part of the peace accord with Israel to establish

Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Hisham Awartani, considered a leading Palestinian economist and an advisor to several companies, said the new government could easily fall into the habit of trying to direct the economy.

"If it turns out to be anything but a market economy, it will be a disaster," he warned.

Mr. Awartani added that Palestinian authorities have already issued exclusive business licenses in exchange for a share of the profits, which have effectively created car-

tels in the telecommunications, petroleum, cement and other sectors.

"The licensing and functioning of companies was to be freed from too much government intervention," said Mr. Awartani, adding the Palestinian authorities should lax profits as a way of generating income and not through the granting of licenses.

Mr. Awartani said he was also concerned that former military and political favourites would be appointed to key economic positions within the government.

"There is a strong tempta-

tion to settle debts through the economy," he said. "Recruiting technocrats on the basis of their political record, that would be devastating."

Riad Masri is the administrative manager for the Palestine Development and Investment Company, which has already generated \$200 million, mostly from Palestinians living abroad, for projects in the autonomous territories.

The company has set up several subsidiaries in real estate, textiles and tourism, to name a few, and plans to issue shares as soon as the future government estab-

lishes the financial laws.

"As investors, we would prefer a free market," said Mr. Masri, whose company plans to eventually raise \$1 billion in capital. "Establishing a safe and secure environment is also very important for our investors."

Mr. Abdul Hadi says that the new government has to send a clear signal to expatriate Palestinians, who are expected to be the primary investors in the territories, that it is safe to come home.

"We have to make it clear that we are open for business," he said.

U.S. growth slows but economists divided on rate cut

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Figures released this week confirm that U.S. economic growth has slowed from its rapid pace of earlier this year, but analysts are divided over whether the slowdown is enough to prompt a new rate cut by the Federal Reserve (Fed).

"We had a little spurt in the summer and the economy has cooled off since then," David Wyss, economist at DRJ/McGraw Hill.

Mark Zandi, economist at Regional Financial Associates, said unemployment and home sales data "are consistent with an economy that is expanding moderately at a non-inflationary pace. It might be a little weaker than hoped for."

The government said job growth was sluggish in November and new home sales fell 2.7 per cent in October.

Additionally, the index of leading economic indicators, seen as a gauge of economic activity over the next six months, fell 0.5 per cent in October.

Several economists said the U.S. economy should grow in the fourth quarter at an annual rate of about two per cent, half the 4.2 per cent rate in the third quarter.

John Lonski, chief economist at Moody's, predicted growth of 2.5 per cent in the October-December period. Unlike some analysts, Mr. Lonski predicted the Federal Reserve would cut short-term interest rates later this month to stimulate the economy.

The Labour Department said nonfarm payroll employment increased by 166,000 jobs in November and the unemployment rate increased to 5.6 per cent from 5.5 per cent the previous month.

Some analysts said they were concerned by signs of weakness in the report.

"The overall tone was sof-

ter," said Mr. Wyss. He noted that — excluding technical factors — nonfarm payroll growth was below 100,000 for the third consecutive month.

Manufacturing employment fell by 32,000 jobs, which is "very, very weak," according to Brian Fabbri, chief U.S. economist at Paribas Capital Markets. This suggests that industrial production declined in November, he said.

"Until we get rid of some inventories, it looks like we're going to have very minimal growth in the manufacturing sector of our economy," Mr. Fabbri said.

But other analysts said they were not concerned with the pace of growth.

"I'm not depressed with how the economy is doing. There are a few signs that say we are doing better," said Robert Brusca, chief economist at Nikko Securities International. "We did have a weak spot (in the autumn) but we seem to be bouncing back with great vigour."

Mr. Brusca said weakness in manufacturing is offset by strength in the service sector.

"The housing market might be cooling off from the rather strong levels of activity in the fall, but my suspicion is we will see a bounceback of activity in the first half of 1996 — mortgage levels are still low, confidence levels are still high," said Mr. Zandi.

Meanwhile a bank forecast said the risk of a recession in the United States in 1996 had heightened, with the chance of a downturn at 50 per cent.

The "recession watch index" compiled by Comerica Bank, which forecasts the likelihood of a national recession occurring within the next 12 months, reached the 50 per cent probability level in November.

Single currency to dominate EU summit

BRUSSELS (R) — European Union (EU) leaders meet this week to name their controversial single currency and plan enlargement of the bloc to bring in East European and Mediterranean nations.

At a summit in Madrid on Friday and Saturday, the leaders face several problems, from how to launch their stalled police agency Europol to the cost of rebuilding battered Bosnia.

It is the single currency that is expected to dominate the headlines and the leaders' thoughts — none more so than French President Jacques Chirac.

His country has been paralysed by transport strikes called in response to an economic discipline Paris must impose if it is to qualify for the currency.

Germany is demanding the strictest economic rigour as

the price for sharing its mark in the new currency, likely to be named the "Euro" by the leaders.

France's turmoil has underlined the difficulties some countries will have getting their economies in order, but without Paris and other borderline countries, a new currency would end up as an extended mark zone with three or four countries participating.

With two years to go before countries must be judged for their fitness to join, EU leaders are under pressure to take decisions to set the stage for the currency's introduction.

"If (they do) not," said one EU diplomat, "the markets will punish them."

Although the overall plan, calling for qualifying countries to be chosen based on their economic performance

in 1997, is more or less agreed, the devil is in the details.

France, for example, is at loggerheads with all the other EU members over what data to use to decide who qualifies.

Facing elections in 1998, Paris wants the decision out of the way as soon as possible and is arguing for it to be taken based on estimated economic data available at the end of 1997.

Germany says it will only accept more reliable data in February or April 1998.

One decision the leaders will not take is how to deal with currencies in countries that either do not make the qualifications or, like Britain and Denmark, have an opt-out.

Opening up that issue at the summit would be "suicide for us all," one EU diplomat said. Instead, the leaders will

order up a study from the European Monetary Institute, their soon-to-be central bank.

The leaders are expected to consider demands that they set a firm date for EU membership negotiations to begin with Poland, Hungary, the Baltic states and a host of other former Communist Bloc countries lining up to join.

EU diplomats say the leaders may agree to announce that negotiations with the easterners, whose leaders will be present in Madrid, should begin six months after the end of next year's review by the EU of its treaties.

This would put the easterners on the same footing as Cyprus and Malta. The review, formally called the inter-governmental conference, is expected to last until mid-1997.

GCC leaders reject proposed customs union, official says

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf leaders have rejected proposals for unifying customs tariffs on foreign imports as part of an economic pact aimed at creating a common market, a senior Gulf official told a newspaper Monday.

The heads of state of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), who held their annual summit in Muscat last week, discussed a proposed standard tariff that has been worked out over the past two years.

"The summit did not agree on the tariff. The GCC leaders stressed this subject needed a consensus given its significance," said GCC assistant secretary general for economic affairs, Abdullah Al Quwaiz.

"Any way out of this will not be necessarily proposing the same formula. The GCC secretariat will propose new alternatives and will seek proposals from each member," he told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Bayan.

Mr. Quwaiz, a Saudi, did not say why the GCC leaders failed to agree on the unified tariff, which is essential for the establishment of the common market.

Tariff unification was supposed to materialise five years after the six members

signed an economic accord in 1983. But the project was held up by differences on the level of the new tariff.

Officials said this year there was a compromise of eight to 10 per cent to bridge the gap between low and high duties in the group.

The proposal also included setting up a fund to collect tariff revenue and compensate member states which could be affected by lowering their taxes.

GCC customs chiefs said before the summit they had made headway in the unification process, classifying most of the nearly 1,300 imported items which would be either taxed or exempted.

The GCC groups Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and the UAE in a loose economic, defence and political alliance created in 1981.

A common GCC market could give birth to one of the biggest consumer blocs in the world, with imports of more than \$50 billion and a gross domestic product of around \$200 billion.

ASEAN, EU say free trade offers benefits to all

BANGKOK (R) — Increased trade between Europe and South East Asia offers more jobs and increased prosperity to both sides, senior officials from the regions said Monday.

In a joint news conference after a meeting, economic ministers of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), European Commission Vice-President Leon Brittan said more European exports would help cut European unemployment while greater investment in Asia would raise living standards here.

"I believe that opening our doors to trade is not a favour to others, but a favour to ourselves as it helps our own economy. That is true for us all," Brittan said.

Deputy Prime Minister Amnua Virawan agreed:

"It will be mutually beneficial to us to promote inter-regional trade and investment."

Some Asian officials also see closer ties with Europe as a way of balancing the perceived domination of the Asia-Pacific region by the United States.

"It's always desirable to have a counter-weight, to have a balance in our relationships whether on a global basis or on a regional basis," Mr. Amnua said.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Sir Brittan, who is responsible for trade and commercial matters at the European Union's (EU) executive arm, said Monday's meeting with ASEAN, the first of its kind, marked a significant

step towards free trade between the regions and in the world.

"In particular it has allowed us to prepare the ground for the meeting of the heads of government of the EU and Asia which will take place at the beginning of March (1996)," he said.

"It has set the stage for the further liberalisation of trade in Europe... and in Asia," he said. "We believe it is necessary to open trade on a world level. We have cleared the decks for action."

Sir Brittan said the meeting had discussed the possibility of new protocols on international telecommunications leading to a world agreement on the industry.

He said the continuing rise in intra-ASEAN trade, a topic which dominated a day-

long meeting of ASEAN economic ministers on Sunday, was no threat to Europe.

"I don't think one could possibly complain about an increase in trade in a region so long as that comes from the lowering of barriers in the region rather than the raising of external barriers," he said.

Sir Brittan told Reuters earlier in an interview that ASEAN expected Europe to reciprocate if it lowered tariff barriers.

THE Daily Crossword by Frank R. Jackson

ACROSS

- 1 Delicate needlework
- 5 Breathing sound
- 9 Grooves
- 14 Rds.
- 15 Egyptian goddess
- 16 Martini item
- 17 Sedimentary material
- 18 Baseball glove
- 19 Type of match
- 20 Offenbach favorite
- 23 Drinks of liquor
- 24 Fencer's blade
- 25 Poetically above
- 27 Cease
- 32 Avid
- 36 Always
- 39 Morally base
- 40 Fanciful stories
- 43 Atlanta attraction
- 44 Sch. type
- 45 Distributa
- 46 Established method
- 48 Headache remedy
- 50 Mongrel dog
- 53 Mum
- 58 Chaucer opus
- 63 Loudly vocal
- 64 Energy source: abbr.
- 65 Family member
- 66 Smarted
- 67 Author Sholem
- 68 Big man on stage
- 69 High-strung
- 70 Ship's officer
- 71 Slippery ones

DOWN

- 1 Endures
- 2 Pertaining to birds
- 3 Pablo Casals' instrument
- 4 Organic compound
- 5 Full of crevices
- 6 Like
- 7 Supple
- 8 Prohibit legally
- 9 Kind of break
- 10 Aspirin
- 11 Traveler's need, at times
- 12 Of equal length
- 13 Observed
- 21 Atmospheric disturbance
- 22 Harbor conveyance
- 26 Genuine
- 28 Of grandparents
- 29 Window feature
- 30 Dairy case item
- 31 Hetchery?
- 32 Selves
- 33 Organized military assemblage
- 34 Snares
- 35 Give off
- 37 Compete
- 38 Ms. Bombick
- 41 Thigh bone
- 42 Implied but not expressed
- 47 Come forward
- 49 Soul
- 51 Builder's item
- 52 OK city
- 54 Fall into disuse
- 55 Cease
- 56 Happiness
- 57 Rulers
- 58 Hurl
- 59 Funny Johnson
- 60 Part of speech
- 61 Thrashes
- 62 Geometric figure: abbr.

Yesterday's puzzle solved:

ACME FOOL THIS SNOOP LUBE BONA COMBINATION LOCK USE COWS DALAI DETOURS SPARS OKRA STAKEOUT TITLE THEN FLO HANA CREPT STAY AGE MIES JOHNS TORREADOR SALE EMIRS TACTITLY ARSON SOCK RUE PICTURE POSTCARD SLUE ALIT AUDIO OLE PITH REED

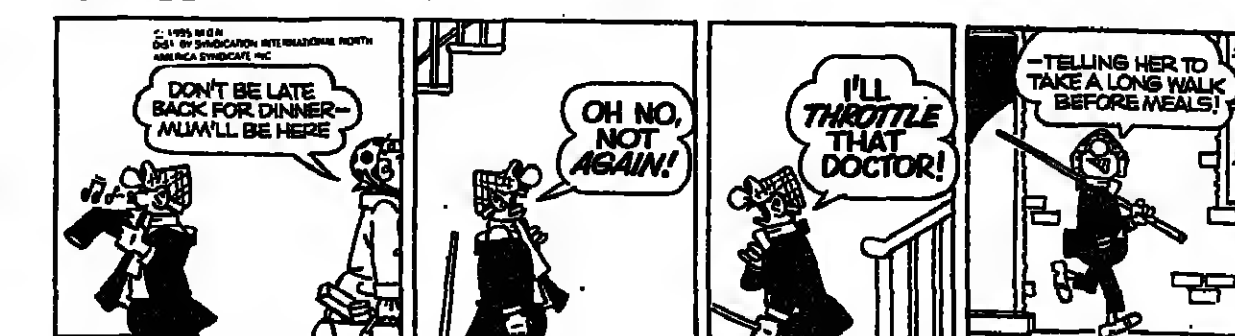
THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



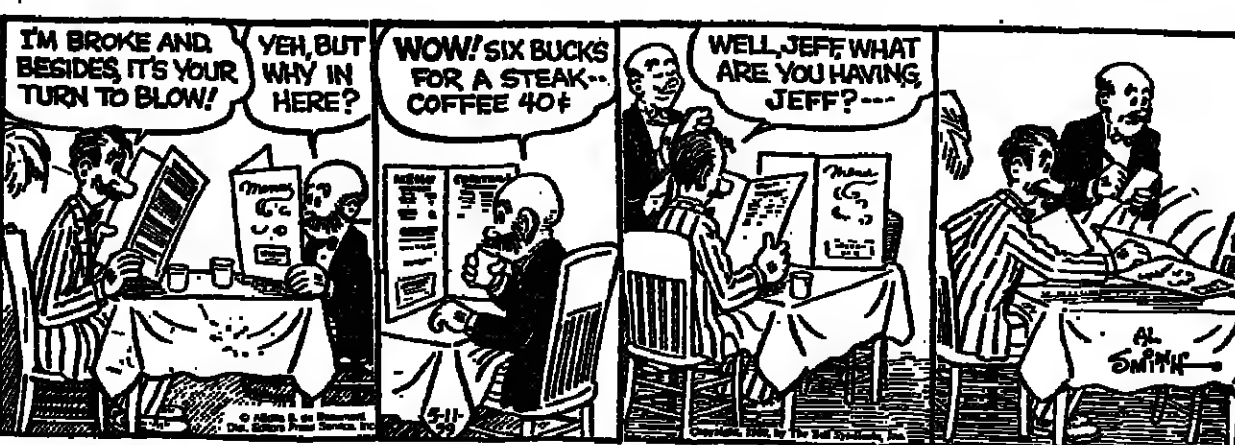
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can get ahead much faster today with the aid of good friends to be sure to contact the right ones.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Your reputation can soar by handling outside activities efficiently today. Gain the support of a bigwig for a new assignment.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You are highly inspired to gain your ambitions and should jot down your ideas so that you will not forget them later tonight.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You are eager to get business affairs arranged which can bring you greater success, so get busy at it.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be with dynamic partners today and listen to their ideas for your own advancement and cooperate with them.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Do your career activities with greater efficiency today and make a fine impression on superiors. Be bappy at home tonight.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You have wanted to take in new kinds of pleasure for some time, so start making arrangements for such today.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Something different which you do at home can please kin very much. This is a good day to extend invitations to those you are fond of.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Contact associates and make a plan of action which is most worthwhile. Take it easy tonight and rest.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Try to be more modern today and you can become far more successful. Avoid gossips who only waste your time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You are a New Era person and this is the day to show your finest talents and make big headway towards your success.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have many fine ideas which you can easily express today and get good results. This evening is best spent at home with your loved ones.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

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Arab Gulf cement, aluminium production set to surge

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The production of cement and aluminium in six Arab Gulf states is set to surge as they press ahead with expansion projects in a drive to diversify their oil-reliant economies.

Official figures obtained Friday showed cement output capacity in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) would grow to nearly 37.2 million tonnes in 2000 from the current level of around 28.8 million tonnes.

Most of the expansions would be carried out in Saudi Arabia, which produces more than 60 per cent of the GCC's cement output.

A new cement plant would also be set up in Ras Al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with a production capacity of four million tonnes per year.

The projects are designed to face increasing domestic consumption caused by a steady growth in the construction sector, one of the most profitable investment fields in the region given the high real estate prices.

"The expansions and new cement projects will enable the GCC to cater for local demand and export to other countries, mainly Asia," the Doha-based Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting (GOIC) said in a study.

GCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — have launched a drive to expand their non-oil industries to ease reliance on volatile crude earnings, which provide the bulk of their income.

The six members have invested nearly \$40 billion in such industries, boosting their exports to around \$15 billion in 1994 from \$8 billion in 1985.

The contribution of the non-oil industrial sector to the gross domestic product

also doubled to nearly 12 per cent.

More than \$5 billion have been invested in the cement industry and more funds would be pumped into expansion in the coming years.

GOIC figures, which were presented at a meeting of the GCC's 22 cement plants in the UAE, showed the new projects would sharply increase the existing cement

surplus of 560,000 tonnes per year to 4.7 million tonnes in 2000.

The organisation based its projections on an actual cement production of 33.5 million tonnes and demand of 28.8 million tonnes.

"The cheap price of energy, the absence of income taxes on projects and the presence of an advanced infrastructure will make the cement industry in the region one of the most important export-oriented industries," said the GOIC.

Energy prices in the Gulf are among the cheapest in the world as it sits on nearly 60 per cent of the global oil reserves and a third of the world's gas.

Another factor is the GCC's proximity to non-

Arab Asian markets, which are the main importers of its aluminium and other industrial products.

The high aluminium demand in Japan and other Asian countries has prompted the GCC's two smelters in Bahrain and Dubai to raise output capacity to around 700,000 tonnes per year from 450,000 tonnes in 1990.

Business Brief

A review of news from the Arabic press

Amman, Salt city centres and southern Madaba to be turned into touristic areas

★ ★ FEASIBILITY STUDIES for large development projects at downtown Amman, Salt and south Madaba have been completed and approved by the Ministry of Tourism but the implementation of the projects is pending the availability of funds. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which has helped in conducting the studies, has promised to present the projects, costing about \$60 million, to Japanese companies to secure financing. According to Fairouz Massoud, manager for designing the central region, the project in downtown Amman involves transforming the Hashemiyeh Square into a touristic area by setting up a number of museums and opening a tunnel to link to Roman Amphitheatre with the Qalaa Square. Other work includes renovating buildings around the square, transforming the old Amman Municipality building into a large national museum, doing restoration work on the Jabal Al Qalaa ruins and establishing an advanced transport complex along the square. This project is estimated to cost JD 26 million.

The project at Salt, estimated to cost JD 10 million, involves transforming the city centre into a developed touristic area by renovating many buildings and establishing various touristic facilities.

The third project, in the Madaba Governorate, comprises building a \$14 million touristic city overlooking the Dead Sea, installing a cable car between the city and Ma'in Spa and opening a road between the spa and the Dead Sea (Al Dustour).

SSC: End-of-service indemnity is solely an employer-employee dispute

★ ★ THE SOCIAL Security Corporation (SSC), which has appealed a court ruling ordering it to pay end-of-service indemnity to a former worker at the Jordan Electric Power Company, believes that any dispute over such a payment should be resolved between the employer and the employee. A source at the corporation stressed that the SSC has nothing to do with the end-of-service payment which basically is the right for an employee from his employer in accordance with the laws, regulations, arrangements or any agreement between these two parties. "Whether this payment issue was resolved by agreement or by a court decision the corporation is not a part to the dispute," the source said. He clarified that the rights of the workers at the SSC were specified by the social security law and that the end-of-service payment is not one of them (Al Dustour).

Increase in revenue will come from higher economic activity — minister

★ ★ THE MINISTER of finance has stressed that the deficit in the 1996 budget would not necessitate imposing new taxes or making basic amendments on collection of fees. He denied that the draft budget was revenue-oriented saying: "The increase in revenue is not much as it comes to about 9.5 per cent and this extra revenue will be generated from higher economic activity and not from structural changes in the taxation system." The minister explained that indicators confirm an expected improvement in investment activity and, as such, there will be an increase on the collection base. He rejected claims that government spending does not cater for low-income group and pointed out that JD 80 million of the total increase in recurrent spending was for improving living conditions of civil servants and military personnel as an annual increase (Al Ra'i).

'My feet hurt' -- tourists' lament in Paris

PARIS (R) — The splendours of Paris are leaving a new impression on tourists struggling to the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre Museum through a crippling strike — "my feet hurt."

Forlorn visitors, with maps flapping in the chill winter breeze, are braving stoppages to thread their way for hours around a city deprived of its normal lifelines of underground metro trains and buses, and clogged with traffic.

When they get to the sights, they find many museums are shut or partly closed for lack of staff. The Louvre has cut its admission price because some galleries are closed. A major retrospective of the paintings of Paul Cezanne is closing early.

"We went out to the Palace of Versailles by tour bus, but when we got there, strikers were blocking the gates and we couldn't go in," Grumbled Yuko, a 28-year-old Japanese tourist.

The strikes against austerity plans by the centre-right government are adding to gloom for the tourism sector after a strong start to 1995.

A strong franc, worries about a wave of bombings in France blamed on Algerian Muslim extremists and opposition to French nuclear tests in the South Pacific have all hurt reservations.

Tourists unable to put off visits during the strikes, now beginning their third week, are advised to bring their most comfortable basking shoes.

"We've been walking seven hours a day," said Manuel Gonzalez, 24, a Spanish bank employee from Madrid, visiting Paris with his girlfriend Nora Alvarez, 22. "But we're on the side of the strikers."

"I brought my running shoes, that helps a lot," said Peg Stanley, an astronomer from Baltimore, Maryland, in a cafe at the Louvre during a break in a conference she was attending.

She said she got caught between riot police and a

Financial Markets			
In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
U.S. Dollar in International Markets			
Currency	New York 11/12/95	Tokyo 11/12/95	
British Pound	1.5340	1.5334	
Deutsche Mark	1.4465	1.4441	
Swiss Franc	1.4610	1.4670	
French Franc	4.9855	4.9910	
Japanese Yen	101.25	101.07	
European Currency Unit	1.2750	1.2749	
European Currency Unit			
Currency	1 MONTH	3 MONTH	6 MONTH
U.S. Dollar	5.42	5.50	5.41
British Pound	6.57	6.25	6.12
Deutsche Mark	5.73	5.44	5.34
Swiss Franc	1.18	1.23	1.21
French Franc	5.48	5.40	5.35
Japanese Yen	0.82	0.84	0.84
European Currency Unit	5.44	5.28	5.12
Precious Metals			
Gold	390.28	7.78	5.27
Silver	5.27	0.100	
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Currency	Old	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7100	0.7100	
British Pound	1.0438	1.0438	
Deutsche Mark	0.4918	0.4922	
Swiss Franc	0.4868	0.4898	
French Franc	0.1418	0.1425	
Japanese Yen	0.0095	0.0095	
Dutch Guilder	0.4374	0.4374	
Spanish Peseta	0.0000	0.0000	
Italian Lira	0.0045	0.0047	
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000	
Other Currencies			
Currency	Old	Offer	
Bahraini Dinar	1.4620	1.4710	
Lebanese Lira	0.043715	0.044650	
Saudi Riyal	0.1810	0.1898	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3670	2.3670	
Qatari Riyal	0.1952	0.1952	
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2100	
Omani Riyal	1.8538	1.8410	
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1955	
Greek Drachma	0.2855	0.3115	
Cypriot Pound	1.0000	1.0000	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES			
LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.			
One U.S. dollar	1.3808/18	Canadian dollar	1.4442/52
	1.4442/52	Deutsche marks	1.6168/78
	1.6168/78	Dutch guilders	1.1664/74
	29.68/72	Swiss francs	4.9883/35
	4.9883/35	Belgian francs	1591.5/3.0
	100.38/98	French francs	6.6950/50
	6.6950/50	Italian lire	6.3600/50
	6.3600/50	Japanese yen	5.5867/67
	5.5867/67	Norwegian crowns	1.4137/42
	1.4137/42	Danish crowns	0.7360/70
	0.7360/70	Singapore dollars	7.7340/45
	7.7340/45	Australian dollars	
		Hong Kong dollars	
One sterling	\$1.5326/36		
One ounce of gold	\$390.10/390.40		

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
DOING BANK OFFER AMMAN - SHEWAN			
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	11/12/1995	CHANGE
ARAB BANK P.C.	340	60310	236.000 237.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	1100	4705	4.350 4.350
BANK OF JORDAN	5667	20663	3.612 3.640
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	1800	4474	3.480 3.480
JORDAN TRUST BANK	1395	2777	2.210 2.210
JORDAN GULF BANK	1500	1636	0.090 0.090
JORDAN ISLAND BANK	2145	7467	3.490 3.490
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	500	1480	3.300 3.300
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	18600	11405	0.10 0.10
BANK SECTOR			
AL-SHER AL-ARABI INSURANCE	500	2325	4.600 4.650
INSURANCE SECTOR			
JORDANIAN ECONOMIC POWER	39300	66149	1.690 1.690
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	1150	2805	2.520 2.520
JORDAN PORTLAND CEMENTS	650	1.38	2.710 2.710
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1000	945	0.940 0.940
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONSUMERS HOTELS	4900	10676	2.190 2.190
ARAB HOTEL FOR INVESTMENT & RESORTS	1450	4756	1.280 1.280
SARFA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	300	597	1.190 1.190
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	17150	16684	0.940 0.940
SERVICES SECTOR			
JORDAN ROADS & CONCRETE	170	3570	21.000 21.000
JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	20481	27140	3.500 3.500
JORDAN FERTILISER INDUSTRIES	517	1833	2.900 2.900
THE ARAB HOTELS	5400	11230	4.800 4.800
JORDAN PETROLEUM COMPANY	4000	3691	9.240 9.240
THE INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	750	2828	3.370 3.370
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	3082	16213	1.440 1.440
JORDAN CEMENT INDUSTRIES	1350	8100	6.000 6.000
ARAB CHEMICAL DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRIES	250	2760	11.200 11.200
SEWERAGE & WASTE	2000	3133	1.500 1.500
DATA INDUSTRIES	150	323	3.210 3.210
DAR AL-DAR DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	1426	10005	7.000 7.000
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	2250	16741	5.400 5.400
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	34800	20532	600 600
ARAB PAPER CONVERSION & TRADING	3350	6123	1.800 1.800
ARAB TRADING COMPANY	4500	5757	1.000 1.000
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	1450	145	0.000 0.000
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	3000	3000	1.000 1.000
JORDAN ROADS & CONCRETE	1450	6110	2.000 2.000
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1500	4.100	1.400 1.400
ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	150	963	3.700 3.700
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	3300	4758	0.110 0.110
JORDAN TUBES-CHIMICALS	3400	2233	1.700 1.700
ARAB CENTER FOR PLASTIC & CHEMICALS	1200	1024	1.520 1.520
KARIM INVESTMENT	2000	8007	2.050 2.050
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES CO.	4200	7723	1.650 1.650
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL SERVICES CO.	2000	4275	2.100 2.100
AL-KAY READY MEAT MANUFACTURING CO.	2000	27109	1.140 1.140
INTERNATIONAL TRADING & COMMERCE	2000	7700	1.201 1.201
UNION CENTRAL & TRADING CO. LTD.	2000	123035	51.4201 51.4201
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR			
ORAN TOTAL	227455	51.4201	51.4201 51.4201
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN JORDANIAN MARKET			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	197387	161232	

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Baggio misses penalty as Napoli hold Milan

ROME (R) — Superb goalkeeping by Napoli's Giuseppe Tagliatela, including a first-half penalty save from Roberto Baggio, held league leaders Milan to a 0-0 draw at the San Siro on Sunday night.

The result keeps Milan, four points clear at the start of the day, just two ahead of Parma who earlier stretched their unbeaten league run to 10 matches with a 2-1 win over Lazio.

Florentina, a point adrift of Parma, boosted their own title credentials, beating Udinese 3-0.

But champions Juventus, back in fifth, lost ground after their fourth defeat of the season — 2-0 at Sampdoria.

Despite laying siege to the Napoli goal for almost 90 minutes, Milan's frontline, boasting Baggio, George Weah and Dejan Savicevic, never found an answer to Tagliatela.

Baggio's 26th minute penalty, awarded for Andre Cruz's foul on Weah, was well struck but keeper dived full-length to his right to turn the ball away.

After the break, Tagliatela was again called upon to pull off three fine reflex saves from Savicevic, the last a fingertip effort on the goal-line off a downward header.

Parma's Colombian star Faustino Asprilla, playing only his third match this season after a series of legal and domestic problems, justified his selection ahead of out-of-form Hristo Stoichkov with a single stroke of genius in the 37th minute.

With his back to goal about six metres out and surrounded by Lazio defenders, Asprilla fooled goalkeeper Francesco Mancini with a cheeky backheel.

After the break, the hapless Mancini was again wrong-footed as Gianfranco Zola's free-kick crept in off the defensive wall.

Roberto Di Matteo's 90th minute header came too late to spare Lazio from their third defeat in four outings, a run that severely damages their title hopes.

Juventus's chances of catching Milan also suffered a setback in a match originally billed as a triumphant homecoming for the champion's trio of former Sampdoria stars — Gianluca Vialli, Attilio Lombardo and Vladimir Jugovic.

Instead Enrico Chiesa outshone his illustrious predecessors with two goals, taking his tally to five in two matches.

Chiesa opened the scoring in the 43rd minute with a superb shot on the turn.

The striker, a summer signing from Cremonese, added his second in the 52nd, drifting between two defenders before a breath-taking strike that lifted Sampdoria into sixth place.

At Florence, Fiorentina's Argentine star Gabriel Batistuta set up Francesco Baiano's first in the 18th minute, an exquisite chip, before clinching victory with two goals of his own.

Eugenio Fascetti's dream return to Serie A as manager of Bari became a nightmare as his side tumbled to a 7-1 defeat at Cremonese that leaves them propping up the rest of the table.

Earlier in the week, Fascetti had compared his new team's recent form to a heart monitor — "a bit up and down." On Sunday it was down.

Espanyol beat Real Madrid

MADRID (R) — Espanyol climbed over neighbours Barcelona to take second place in the Spanish first division on Sunday after a blistering shot from Francisco Lopez paved the way to a hard-fought 3-1 home win over titleholders Real Madrid.

The defeat leaves Real in seventh place, 11 points behind Atletico Madrid who on Saturday extended their lead at the top with a splendid 3-1 victory over Barcelona, who have slipped to third.

Espanyol, who are now two points behind Atletico, got off to a tremendous start in front of a 37,000 crowd when captain Lopez picked up a loose ball and blasted it home with a left-foot shot from the edge of the area.

Paraguayan forward Miguel Angel Benitez hit the bar midway through the first half and was denied by the post just after the break before finally finding the net with a superb individual effort 12 minutes from time.

Real came back strongly with Raul Gonzalez, Juan Eduardo Esnaider and Michel Gonzalez all forcing spectacular saves from Espanyol keeper Toni Jimenez, redeeming himself after an appalling blunder had cost his side in last week's defeat at Rayo Vallecano.

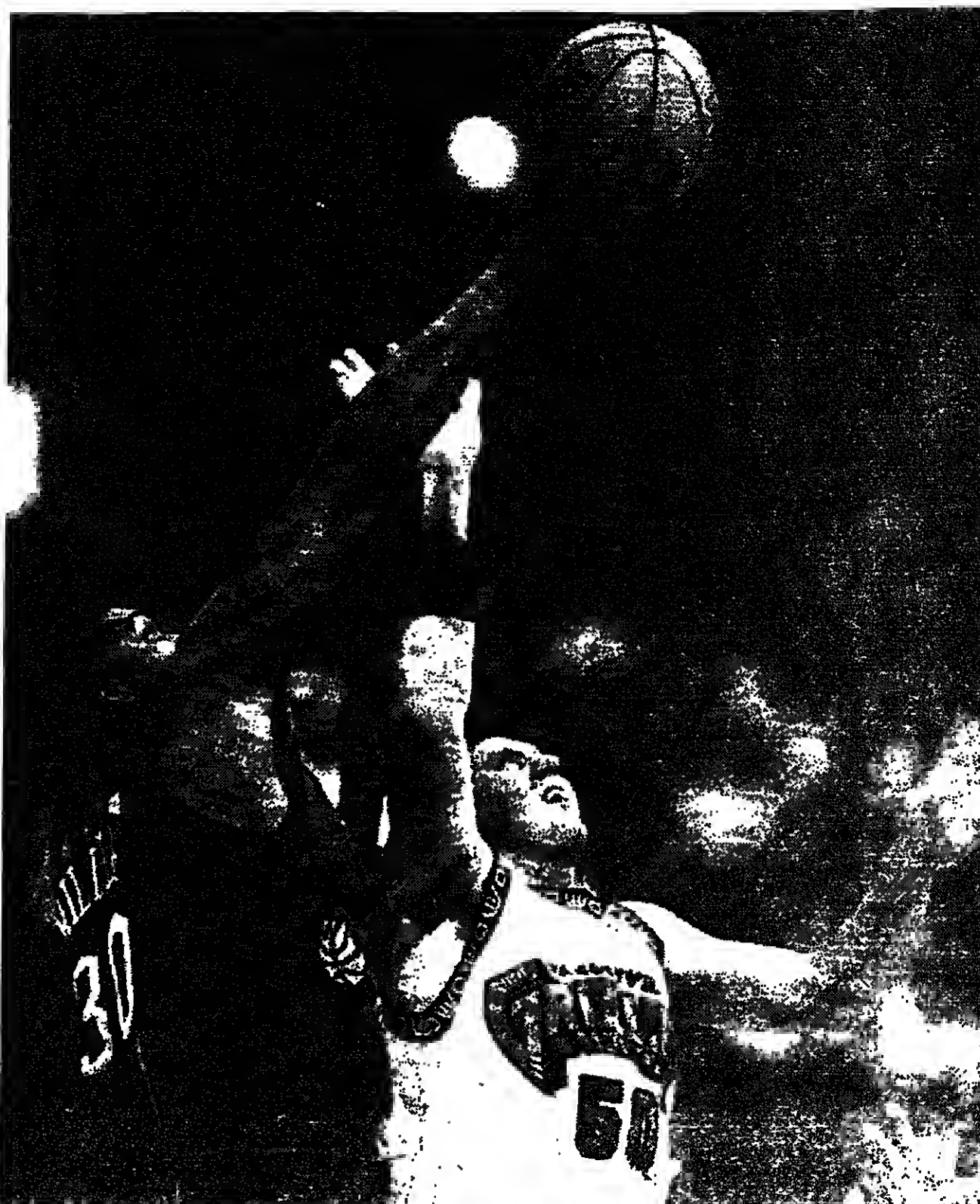
Espanyol's Jordi Lardin put the game beyond Real's reach with six minutes left when he drilled home an Arcega Garcia shot which had rebounded off the post. Real scored a consolation goal through Danish midfielder Michael Laudrup just before time.

In other games Compostela scored early at Real Sociedad through Nigerian forward Christopher Oden and managed to hang on despite heavy pressure and stay in fourth place.

Compostela, who are playing only their second season in the top flight, are just two points behind Barcelona.

An injury-stricken Real Betis travelled to Sporting Gijon without a single forward, but came from behind to win 3-2, with two goals from former Juventus midfielder Robert Jarni. The result means that Betis move up to fifth.

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Vancouver Grizzlies Bryant Reeves goes up for the ball against Toronto Raptors' Oliver Miller (left) during first quarter NBA action in Vancouver. The two Canadian NBA

teams faced each other for the first time in league play (Reuters photo)

Spurs, Rockets lose in double OT

NEW YORK (R) — John Starks and Gary Grant combined to score all 13 of New York's points in the second overtime as the Knicks beat the San Antonio Spurs 118-112 in a thrilling game that continually defied the odds.

The Spurs tied the game at the end of regulation with Sean Elliott at the free throw line shooting two with San Antonio trailing by three points and just 1.2 seconds left.

Elliott missed a wide open lay up at the end of the first overtime that would have clinched it for the Spurs.

The Knicks won the second overtime without any member of their starting front court — because they had all fouled out.

"It was an incredible win and an incredible ballgame," Knicks head coach Don Nelson said. "I'm really proud of the team, the way they hung in there through all the adversity of losing players and having no big players left."

"The big guys were out. I had to step it up a notch," said Starks. "We came up big when we needed to."

Starks led the Knicks with 25 points while Ewing added 19 before fouling out as overtime began. Charles Oakley had 19 points and 19 rebounds and Anthony Mason had 15 points and 15 boards before both joined Ewing on the bench by fouling out.

Robinson recorded a season-high 45 points and 16 rebounds while Elliott added

23 points. "There is no consolation in scoring 45 points after a loss like this," Robinson said. "We battled hard, were beaten off the boards and we made some critical turnovers."

Elliott forced the first overtime after sinking his first free throw to make it 103-101. He intentionally missed his second free throw, caught the rebound that got through Ewing's hands and banked in a 15-foot jumper at the buzzer.

The teams scored just two points apiece in the first overtime, but each had a chance to win. New York had the ball with 25 seconds left, but was called for a 24-second violation an instant before Huber Davis nailed a three-point shot.

On San Antonio's inbound play, Doc Rivers found a wide open Elliott underneath the basket, but he missed the lay-in at the buzzer.

"It was a great game to be in, something to tell the grandkids about," Starks said. In Portland, Arvydas Sabonis took advantage of a second chance at winning the game by hitting a five-foot hook shot at the buzzer to lift the Portland Trail Blazers to a 103-101 double-overtime victory over the Houston Rockets.

Sabonis grabbed a rebound off a missed layup by James Robinson and turned around before hitting the shot that appeared to be launched af-

ter the buzzer. Sabonis had a chance to win it in regulation with the score tied 86-86 but missed an open 18-footer at the buzzer.

Rod Strickland had 32 points and Clifford Robinson added 18 for the Blazers. Clyde Drexler had 26 points and Hakeem Olajuwon added 21 for the Rockets.

In Sacramento, Mitch Richmond scored 15 points and Corliss Williamson added 14 in his NBA debut to lead the Sacramento Kings to a 110-90 rout of the ailing Miami Heat.

Williamson, who had sat out due to surgery to repair a disk problem in his back, was 6-for-8 from the field in 17 minutes off the bench.

Miami, playing without injured starters Alonzo Mourning, Kevin Willis and Billy Owens, was led by rookie Kurt Thomas, who had 29 points and 15 rebounds.

At Indiana, Rick Smith scored a career-high 44 points and had 10 rebounds as the Indiana Pacers handed the Los Angeles Clippers their eighth straight loss 111-104. Smith was 20-of-29 from the field and 4-for-6 from the free throw line.

"Rik, obviously, was sen-

sational," Pacers head coach Larry Brown said. "I was disappointed we didn't throw it to him every time. We've always got to go to Rik."

In Boston, Grant Long's two free throws snapped a tie with 1:42 remaining and Ken Norman scored a season-high 26 points as the Atlanta Hawks broke a five-game losing streak with a 108-103 victory over the Boston Celtics.

Long finished with 15 points and 16 rebounds. "There are no plays run for me, but I hit the boards and run the floor," Long said. "I basically get my offence off of defence."

Dino Radja led Boston with 28 points. In Vancouver, the Vancouver Grizzlies lost their 18th straight game, dropping a 93-81 decision to the Toronto Raptors in the first meeting of the expansion teams.

The Grizzlies, who won their first two games and haven't won since, are three losses away from breaking the record of 20 consecutive defeats set by the 1973-74 Philadelphia 76ers and matched by the Dallas Mavericks two seasons ago.

NBA RESULTS

Indiana	111	LA Clippers	104
New York	118	San Antonio	112 (2-OT)
Atlanta	108	Boston	103
Toronto	93	Vancouver	81
Sacramento	110	Miami	90
LA Lakers	87	Detroit	82
Portland	103	Houston	101 (2-OT)

Lens keep up chase

STRASBOURG (R) — Lens kept up the chase behind French League leaders Paris St. Germain on Sunday with a 2-1 win in Strasbourg to bring them back to six points off the pace.

Lens got off to a great start when striker Tony Vairelles found the net with a fierce right-foot shot after Michael Debeve headed across goal in the 13th minute.

But Strasbourg equalised 20 minutes later when right back Philippe Raschke surprised Lens goalkeeper Guillaume Warmuz, expecting a cross, with a shot inside the near post.

Porto take revenge on Salgueiros

LISBON (R) — Leaders Porto worked off some frustration at being eliminated mid-week from the European Champions Cup by crushing neighbours Salgueiros on Sunday to tighten their grip at the top of the Portuguese first division.

Porto, whose early exit from Europe was due to their inability to score consistently, suffered no hesitation in front of goal as they despatched Salgueiros 4-0 in an oportro derby.

Hungarian midfielder Peter Lipseci had a hand in all the goals, scoring one himself and setting up the other three.

Porto, who have not in lost in the league for 14 months, head the Portuguese championship with 35 points, five more than perennial rivals Sporting, with Benfica three points further back in third place.

Sporting kept up their challenge with a 1-0 away win over Belenenses on Friday thanks to a 60th minute goal by striker SA Pinto.

Desperate to take the championship for the first time in 13 years, Sporting strengthened their attack mid-week by signing burly Czechoslovak striker Tomas Shuhravy on loan from Italian second division side Genoa.

But Benfica, who were knocked out of the UEFA Cup by Germany's Bayern Munich on Tuesday, were made to struggle for their 2-0 home win over last-placed Campomaiorense on Saturday.

A moment of magic by young striker Edgar Pacheco, who dribbled along the edge of the penalty area before unleashing a fierce right-footed drive to open the scoring after 68 minutes, helped

settle Benfica's nerves. Brazilian striker Marcelo Cipriano added the second shortly before the final whistle but the final score flattered the Lisbon side.

Striker Domingos Oliveira opened the scoring for Porto in the 28th minute driving home a lipseci cross from the left.

The Hungarian made it 2-0 just two minutes later when he sent a delicately chipped shot into the top left hand corner of the net.

Brazilian midfielder Edmilson Pimenta scored twice in the second half to help overcome some of their disappointment in not making the quarter-finals of the European Cup.

The 1987 cup winners finished third in their qualifying group after managing only a 2-2 away draw with Denmark's Aalborg on Wednesday.

Japan, Korea hope to win World Cup bids

PARIS (AFP) — Korea took a sideswipe at Japan's bid for the 2002 World Cup here on Monday with a promise that travel costs would be affordable.

Korea further promised to plough back about \$70 million of their World Cup profits directly to the six football confederations.

With less than six months till the June 1 decision by FIFA, Korea played what they believe are financial trump cards in the fierce battle to become the first World Cup hosts in Asia.

"If foreign fans cannot afford to attend the tournament then its unique carnival atmosphere will be lost," declared Song Young Shik, secretary general of Korea's bid committee.

The Korean attack was aimed at what it sees as Japan's Achilles Heel — the strong yen making it one of the most expensive countries in the world.

Song was quick to point out that in Japan it can cost \$320 for a taxi from Tokyo airport to the city centre while in Seoul the cost was only \$14.

In a bid to win votes Korea lobbied support from financially poor countries in Africa and Asia by promising to plough back 90 per cent of funds raised by the Korean organising committee directing to the six confederations.

The sum is expected to be at least \$70 million, but possibly more as television deals and marketing rights are likely to be more lucrative by the next century.

However, the Japanese have promised to give money raised from ticket sales, including those from virtual stadia where supporters would watch 30 images of matches in other stadia, to FIFA, who will then share out the cash.

Korea has already promised to pay five days extra acclimatisation costs to teams which qualify for the World Cup finals. But they have now offered another 10 days costs, worth \$5.7 million, making 15 days in all.

Meanwhile Song brushed aside alleged comments from FIFA president Joao Havelange that he favoured Japan's bid. "I hope that Havelange was misquoted," Song said. "FIFA should maintain strict neutrality."

Song further dismissed involvement of two Korean presidents in slush fund scandals, allegedly worth five million dollars, as damaging to their candidature for the 2002 event.

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East-West vulnerable North deals.

NORTH		SOUTH	
♠ K 4	♠ 10 9 8 6	♠ 10 7 5 2	♠ 9 8 7 4
♥ 8 5	♥ 10 9 8 6	♥ 10 7 5 2	♥ 9 8 7 4
♦ 5 2	♦ 10 9 8 6	♦ 10 7 5 2	♦ 9 8 7 4
♣ 10 7 5 2	♣ 10 9 8 6	♣ 10 7 5 2	♣ 9 8 7 4

The bidding:
3♠ Pass
3♥ Pass
3♦ Pass
3♣ Pass

Opening lead: Five of ♠

It is a natural reaction to win a trick as cheaply as possible. More often than not, that's the right thing to do. Once in a while, though, circumstances dictate otherwise.

Holding a singleton club honor, we would have bid five clubs with the South hand; that contract needs no more than the spade finesse to succeed even if diamonds break badly. Change a low diamond to a low club, and we would clearly opt for three no trump.

West led a low spade, 4th in the closed hand with the nine. Declarer placed the king of clubs on the table, and East routinely held up the ace. Now declarer was an entry short to set up and run dummy's long suit (note the difference: had declarer held another club, the limit of the hand was now seven tricks).

Declarer went wrong at the very first trick. Logic alone should have indicated the necessity for two dummy entries, and that the spade suit was the only place to obtain them. Declarer should win the first trick with the ace, then later the jack and king would have been entries with the help of a spade finesse.

What if the queen of spades was with East? Once East played the eight to the first trick, it could not be! The Rule of Eleven discloses that there are six cards higher than the five-spot in the other three hands. East has produced one, dummy holds two, thus accounting for all of them. Barring some eccentric opening lead, the queen of spades had to be with West.

Santos, Botafogo reach Brazilian final

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Santos gave a performance reminiscent of the club's great days as they overcame a three-goal deficit against Fluminense on Sunday to reach the final of the Brazilian championship where they will face Botafogo.

Santos, beaten 4-1 in the first leg of their semifinal on Thursday, hammered Fluminense 5-2 to level the aggregate score at 6-6 and qualify on having the better overall record in the competition.

Botafogo went through on the same criteria after drawing 0-0 at home to Cruzeiro following a 1-1 draw in the first leg.

Santos striker Giovanni produced another virtuoso performance for his team, scoring the first two goals and providing the passes for the other three.

His 25th minute penalty followed by a superb goal from the edge of the penalty area four minutes later put Santos back in the tie.

The two teams, playing with the verve and style for which Brazilian soccer is famous, provided an enthralling game as they left aside the violence and petulance which often mars the country's domestic football.

Striker Macedo gave Santos a three-goal advantage in the 51st minute after Giovanni's pass but one minute later Fluminense substitute Rogerinho headed in a rebound to put his team back in front on aggregate.

Santos had the advantage again 10 minutes later when Giovanni sped to the byline and crossed for Camandocia to make it 4-1. In the 83rd minute he set up the fifth goal for Marcelo Passos with a Cheeky Backheel.

Rogerinho pulled another goal back one minute later but Fluminense were unable to complete a comeback. "Giovanni was exceptional," said Fluminense's beaten coach Joel Santana.

Santos became famous during the 17 years which Pele spent with them but have not won a trophy since 1984. Pele is now a member of the club board and visited the team hotel before the game. His son Edinho is the team's regular goalkeeper.

Fluminense had reached the semifinals with a modest squad who were involved in a long-running dispute with the club's administration, who they claimed were paying their wages two months late.

Cowboys defeated as coach's call backfires

PHILADELPHIA (R) — A questionable call by Dallas coach Barry Switzer backfired Sunday, opening the door for a 42-year field goal by Gary Anderson with 86 seconds left that lifted the Philadelphia Eagles past the Cowboys 20-17.

Switzer elected to go for a first down on fourth-and-1, into the wind at the Cowboys' 29. Emmitt Smith's run into the middle was stopped for no gain but referees blew the whistle for the two-minute warning prior to the snap.

Switzer left his offence on the field and ran the same play and Smith was stuffed again. Philadelphia ran three plays that gained four yards, then Anderson kicked the game-winner.

"I knew we weren't going to win the ball game if we didn't make the plays," said Switzer.

"Yes, I would agree about the decision on going for it again," said owner Jerry Jones, whose Cowboys were upset last week by Washington. "We usually make those kinds of plays."

Philadelphia (9-5) moved within one game of first-place Dallas (10-4) in the NFC East. Despite the loss, Dallas clinched a playoff berth when Chicago and St. Louis lost.

Ricky Watters continued his dominant play for the Eagles. He carried 33 times for 112 yards and a touchdown and added six receptions. Smith gained 108 yards on 27 carries including one touchdown run that left him one rushing touchdown shy of tying John Riggins' NFL mark of 24 for a season.

At Carolina, Steve Young threw two touchdown passes and ran for another score as the sizzling San Francisco 49ers won some revenge with a 31-10 romp over the Carolina Panthers.

The 49ers (10-4) have won five successive games to tie Dallas for the best record in the NFC and grab the inside track for home-field advantage throughout the playoffs. The Niners win the tiebreaker since they beat Dallas last month.

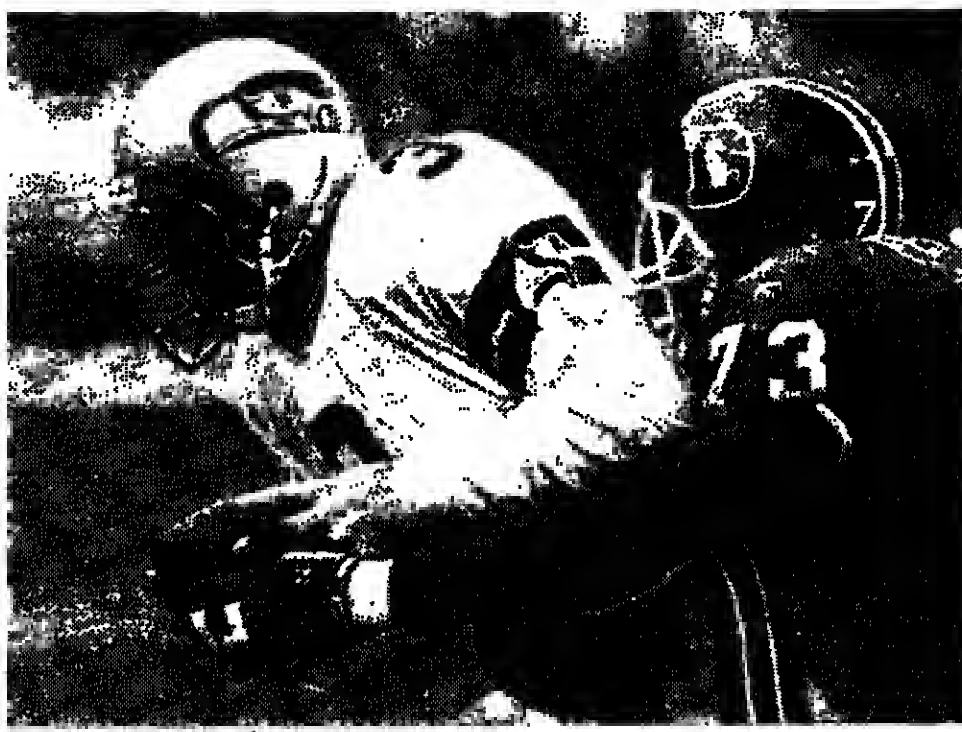
The Niners have not lost since a stunning 13-7 home setback against Carolina on November 5.

In Atlanta, Morten Andersen kicked four field goals — including a pair of team-record 55-yarders — as the Atlanta Falcons beat the New Orleans Saints 19-14. Andersen hit field goals of 25, 51 and 55 yards in the first half as the Falcons (8-6) took a 9-0 halftime lead. He added a late 55-yarder to become the first NFL kicker to boot three field goals of 50 yards or more in one game.

"I think I would have made the last 55-yarder even if it wasn't New Orleans, but it was a motivating factor," said Andersen, who played 13 seasons with New Orleans (6-8).



Washington Redskins tight end Jamie Asher (84) flips over New York Giants safety Vencie Glenn after catching a pass from quarterback Heath Shuler in the first period of their NFL game (Reuters photo)



Denver Broncos linebacker Simon Fletcher (73) sacks Seattle Seahawks quarterback Rick Mirer for a sixteen yard loss during the first quarter in Denver (Reuters photo)

In Cincinnati, Jeff Blake passed for 253 yards and a touchdown and Doug Pelfrey kicked three field goals as the Cincinnati Bengals beat the Houston Oilers 24-17. Quarterback Steve McNair drove the Oilers to the Detroit 5 late in the last quarter but was intercepted by Mike Johnson.

In Houston, Scott Mitchell threw two touchdown passes to Herman Moore as the charging Detroit Lions survived a late scare to defeat the Houston Oilers 24-17.

The Bears (7-7) lost for the fifth time in their last six games, while the Bengals improved to 6-8.

In Houston, Scott Mitchell threw two touchdown passes to Herman Moore as the charging Detroit Lions survived a late scare to defeat the Houston Oilers 24-17.

The expansion Jaguars fell to 3-11.

NFL RESULTS

Atlanta	19	New Orleans	14
San Francisco	31	Carolina	10
Cincinnati	16	Chicago	10
Detroit	24	Houston	17
Indianapolis	41	Jacksonville	31
New England	31	NY Jets	28
Philadelphia	20	Dallas	17
Buffalo	45	St. Louis	27
Seattle	31	Denver	27
NY Giants	20	Washington	13
Pittsburgh	29	Oakland	10
Tampa Bay	13	Green Bay	10 (OT)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Ripken SI sportsman of the year

NEW YORK (R) — Cal Ripken Jr., baseball's ultimate ironman, was named "Sportsman of the Year" by Sports Illustrated magazine on Sunday. The 35-year-old Ripken broke Lou Gehrig's "unbreakable" record of 2,130 consecutive games played during the 1995 season, while helping to rebuild baseball's broken relationship with its fans following the strike of 1994. The Baltimore Orioles all-star shortstop played in his 2,131st straight game on Sept. 6 to break one of the most prestigious records in sports and concluded the season with a total of 2,153 consecutive games. Other finalists for the award were Houston Rockets centre Hakeem Olajuwon, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Steve Young, Wimbledon and U.S. Open winner Pete Sampras and Connecticut women's basketball star Rebecca Lobo.

German soccer hit by withdrawals

BONN (R) — German soccer coach Bert Vogts, with many of his regular players hit by injury, on Sunday called up to uncapped players from this season's surprise team Hansa Rostock for next Friday's friendly against South Africa. Creative midfielder Stefan Beinlich and defender Rene Schneider were both included in the 17-man squad for the match which will be played in Johannesburg. It was just recognition for Rostock, well-placed in the Bundesliga and battling for a place in Europe after winning promotion last season. Seven first choice players, Heiko Herrlich, Matthias Sammer, Mario Basler, Oliver Kahn, Thomas Strunz, Markus Babel and Mehmet Scholl, all withdrew through injury or illness.

China mulling 2004 Olympic bid

BEIJING (R) — Beijing, a narrow loser to Sydney in bidding to host the 2000 Summer Olympics, will decide by mid-January whether to seek the 2004 Games, Chinese sporting officials said on Monday. "It has not been decided. We are still considering whether to host or not to host the 2004 Olympics," Chinese Olympic Committee spokesman Lu Kewen said. The International Olympic Committee reported at the weekend in Switzerland that China's capital was not among 10 cities that had already applied or were known to be planning bids. The Chinese spokesman insisted that Beijing should not be counted out for 2004.

Ukraine coaches to be replaced

KIEV (R) — The coaches of Ukraine's national and Olympic soccer teams will be replaced after failing to qualify for the European and Olympic championships, the Ukrainian football federation said on Monday. "Their duties ended after the qualifying cycle for the European Championship," federation secretary general Mykola Chernysh said. "A council of coaches will decide on replacements." National coach Anatoly Konkov resigned after Ukraine finished out of the running for the 1996 European Championship in England, he said. "Unfortunately Konkov's health is weak and he wrote a letter of resignation. But the real reason he's leaving is that we had not expected the sides would fare so badly. Our potential was much better," Chernysh said. Olympic coach Viktor Kolotov led the team to a disappointing second place in their qualifying group, although they had been the favourites.

World Cup draw enough to delight Mona Lisa

PARIS (R) — The Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile may just be transformed into the broadest of grins if Italy avoid the twin traps of Croatia and Yugoslavia when the draw for the 1998 World Cup qualifiers is made in the Louvre on Tuesday.

The majestic surroundings of the world's most famous museum are an unlikely setting for a strange soccer ritual assembling people from each corner of the globe to witness 190 hollow balls being plucked from goldfish bowls.

But the football fortunes of 162 nations baog in the balance and it is not that far-fetched to speculate that world peace may do too, given the passions the game can arouse.

A war once broke out between Honduras and El Salvador over a World Cup qualifier and the entry of the five nations making up the former Yugoslav republic give rise to fears of what could happen if certain of them are drawn against each other.

Thanks to the ranking system used in the draw, two

former world champions, Italy and England, could end up in the same qualifying group as both Croatia and Yugoslavia with only one of them guaranteed a place in the 32-nation finals in France.

Croatia and Yugoslavia are both placed in low-seeded pools from which the draw is made and the groups they each end up in will almost certainly be the toughest of all.

The European section of the draw, creating a mad scramble for the 14 places available in the finals, will inevitably provide the most cut-throat competition.

For once, South America are uninvolved in the draw at all as Brazil have already qualified as champions, alongside hosts France, and the other nine nations of the continent will play in a mini-championship against each other with the top four travelling to France.

Africa, the rising power-house of the game and with two extra places this time for a total of five, will also attract a lot of interest though this is diminished a little because

continental champions Nigeria, three-times World Cup finalists Cameroon and Egypt all have byes into the second round.

Asia and the Oceania and North American confederations each have three places at stake with the Asians earning a fourth if the eventually a playoff with the best team emerging from Oceania.

Europe's system of nine groups of either five or six teams has given rise to justifiable fears that some top nations may fall by the wayside as only group winners are certain of qualifying.

The best of the second-placed teams will also fight a finals berth but the other eight group runners-up will be involved in do-or-die play-offs from which only four will emerge.

For that reason, the nine top seeds — Germany, Spain, Italy, Russia, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden and Romania — will be anxious to avoid England, Portugal and Belgium of the second seeds, Croatia of the third and Yugoslavia of the fourth.

Williams wait for official Senna report

LONDON (AFP) — Formula One team Williams declared on Sunday that it was too soon to comment on claims that Ayrton Senna's death was caused by a faulty steering rod.

The Didcot-based outfit reacted to a report in Sunday's News of the World which said the Brazilian died because the rod had been "badly welded together."

Three times world champion Senna died after smashing into a concrete wall at 190 miles per hour during the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola in April last year.

But Williams' technical director Patrick Head said: "The findings of the investigation into Ayrton's fatal accident are being considered by the magistrate, Maurizio Passarini."

"The comments published today are unofficial. We are currently awaiting Mr. Passarini's official report and cannot make any further comment until this has been published."

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Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi
and Mahmoud Hamideh
in
A Woman Who shook
the Throne of Egypt
(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 677420
CONCORD

Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi
and Mahmoud Hamideh ...in
A Woman Who shook the Throne
of Egypt
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 10:30
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هنا نحن الأصل

Ghali is 'positive' after Geneva talks with Aziz

GENEVA (Agencies) — U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said on Sunday he was "quite positive" after talks with Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz that problems between the world body and Baghdad could be solved.

But in brief remarks to reporters after the 80-minute meeting, neither made any reference to the United Nations embargo on Iraq over its 1990 invasion of Kuwait or the possibility of partial oil sales by Baghdad.

"I am quite positive, by definition, I am an optimist. I hope we will be able to solve issues between Iraq and the United Nations," Dr. Ghali said.

A smiling Aziz said he had briefed the U.N. chief on what he called "the hard work that has been done by the Iraqi authorities in the last few months to clarify most of the issues raised in late August after the defections."

He was clearly referring to the flight to Jordan of two sons-in-law of President Saddam Hussein, one of whom said that Iraq had a much larger weapons programme than had been suspected by the outside world.

Mr. Aziz said he was travelling on to New York on

Monday to follow up on his meeting with Dr. Ghali and have more talks with Rolf Ekeus, the U.N. official overseeing the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Ekeus is due to deliver a report to the U.N. Security Council on Dec. 15. The report has been given added interest by the discovery of sophisticated missile parts in Amman which were reportedly being smuggled to Baghdad.

Before Sunday's meeting, at a luxury hotel on the edge of Geneva, U.N. officials said it would focus on an offer by the world body to allow Iraq to sell \$2 billion worth of oil to buy humanitarian supplies badly needed by ordinary Iraqis.

But neither mentioned the issue to reporters and declined to answer questions.

Both U.N. and independent aid agencies say food and medicines are desperately needed across wide areas of Iraq. They say starvation is taking hold in some areas and hospitals have few medical supplies left.

President Saddam, who is demanding a total lifting of the U.N. sanctions on Iraq, has firmly rejected any suggestions of partial oil sales.

saying the terms imposed by the world body would be a violation of the country's sovereignty.

A month ago, the U.N. chief met Iraq's ambassador in Geneva to discuss the proposals, but both indicated afterwards that no progress had been made.

But Iraq's Oil Minister Amer Rasheed said later in November that the resolution would be acceptable to Iraq with a few modifications.

Under U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, passed in April, Iraq would be allowed to sell oil worth \$2 billion over six months to pay for imports of food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies.

But a third of the proceeds would go to a U.N. fund to compensate victims of its attack on Kuwait.

Before the overall ban on oil exports can be lifted, U.N. officials must certify that Iraq's banned weapons — nuclear, ballistic, chemical and biological — have been destroyed.

The Security Council next reviews sanctions early in January but diplomats say there is little prospect of an easing, which is strongly opposed by the United States.



CELEBRATIONS: Palestinians, restrained by Israeli soldiers, sing and dance in Ramallah as they welcome the first unit of Palestinian National Authority policemen who arrived there on Monday (see page one) (AFP photo)

Britain expels Libyan diplomat

LONDON (Agencies) — Britain on Monday expelled a senior Libyan diplomat, Khalifa Ahmad Bazelya, for "activities incompatible with his diplomatic status," the Foreign Office said.

A statement said he was ordered to leave Britain by Dec. 25.

Mr. Bazelya, who heads the Libyan interests section at the Saudi embassy in London, was said by government sources to have been involved in intimidation and surveillance of Libyan dissidents in Britain.

The Saudi embassy has represented Libyan interests here since 1984, when Britain broke off relations with Libya after a London policewoman was killed by shots fired from the Libyan embassy in an altercation with Libyan dissidents.

The expulsion order against Mr. Bazelya was delivered to Saudi Ambassador Ghazi Aljo Sabli, who was summoned to the Foreign Office Monday.

Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad has been investigating the murder last month of Ali Abu Zaid, a 54-year-old Libyan dissident stabbed to death in his west London shop.

Police declined to comment on a possible connection between Abu Zaid's death and the Libyan government.

Civilian officials said the expulsion was unconnected to the death of the dissident.

Abu Zaid, an opponent of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, was found stabbed to death at his London grocery shop.

Police said Abu Zaid appeared to have been the victim of ordinary crime and not of a political assassination as fellow exiles feared.

British officials said they hoped Libya would not retaliate against the two British diplomats attached to the Italian embassy in Tripoli, which represents Britain's interests.

A tit-for-tat expulsion would not be justified, the officials said.

Britain broke off diplomatic relations with Libya after the killing of policewoman Yvonne Fletcher in April 1984.

Fletcher, on duty in central London during a demonstration by Libyan students opposed to Colonel Qadhafi, was killed by a burst of gunfire apparently directed from an embassy window. Eleven students were wounded.

The last Arab diplomat to be expelled by Britain was

Khamis Al Ajili, an administrative attaché at the Iraqi embassy, who was ordered out in October in circumstances similar to the expulsion of Mr. Bazelya.

Tripoli meanwhile offered to help Britain in investigation of the Abu Zaid murder, the Arabic daily Al Hayat reported on Monday.

A Libyan diplomatic source in Cairo told the paper his country was "prepared to send a security team to help uncover clues" in the killing of Abu Zaid, a founder of the opposition National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL).

"If Britain agrees, Libya would send the team within a few days," the source said.

"Information in Libya's security services indicates that Abu Zaid was killed because of dispute with what are called Libyan opposition exile groups, which are really nothing but agents for Western intelligence," the source said.

The NFSL has blamed Col. Qadhafi for ordering Abu Zaid's murder, calling it "a political assassination."

"Qadhafi is behind the crime because he had a debt to settle with Abu Zaid," Mohammad Fayed Jibri, NFSL spokesman in Cairo, told AFP.

Carbomb kills 6 in Madrid

MADRID (Agencies) — Six people were killed and around a dozen injured, several of them seriously, when a booby-trapped car exploded on the outskirts of the Spanish capital, city authorities said.

Soldiers were among the victims, officials said.

The mayor of Madrid, Jose Maria Alvarez del Manzano, who rushed to the scene, said three soldiers were apparently among the dead and two of the injured were in "critical condition."

One of the badly injured men died on arrival in hospital.

The Madrid mayor added that the blast was probably the work of the Basque separatist organisation ETA, which has used booby-trapped cars to carry out attacks in the Spanish capital.

The car exploded near the Puente de Vallecas a little before 3 p.m. (1400 GMT) as a military vehicle drove past. That vehicle was totally destroyed, and some six other vehicles were damaged in the area which is near a school and a clinic.

"I saw a cloud of smoke and fire," an injured witness said, adding that one victim's arm had been blown off.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the blast which comes ahead of a summit of European Union (EU) ministers set to begin Friday in Madrid.

Victims' bodies lay among the charred remains of other cars as plainclothes police picked their way through the debris, looking for clues.

Broken glass from an outpatient clinic and other buildings littered the streets in a 100-metre radius. Police cordoned off the area and officers with sniffer dogs checked other cars, looking for more explosives.

Three of the injured were in critical condition, police said. It was not clear whether the victims were all civilians or whether they included military personnel.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel blocks Palestinian conference

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel on Monday banned a conference on economic development in the Palestinian autonomous areas that was to be held in East Jerusalem, police said. Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal said the conference was against the peace accords signed between the Palestinians and Israel. It had been organised by Palestinian Economy Minister Ahmad Qouriea at the Catholic hostel Notre Dame de France, on the border of the Old City in Jerusalem. A Palestinian flag was to have been flown for the occasion.

Israelis told to be on alert for attacks abroad

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel warned its citizens on Monday to be on alert against attacks when they go abroad. Yigal Pressler, an adviser to Prime Minister Shimon Peres, issued a statement saying: "The prime minister's adviser on terrorism calls on Israeli citizens going abroad to increase their alertness regarding security, since we have learned of possible intentions to carry out attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets abroad." Mr. Pressler gave no details on how Israel knew of possible attacks or what group it feared might carry them out. In October, Israel heightened security at its embassies and at Jewish sites abroad against attacks by Islamic Jihad after the assassination of Islamic Jihad leader Fathi Shaqaqi in Malta on Oct. 26. Islamic Jihad blamed Israel for the killing and vowed revenge. Israel did not respond to accusations that it was responsible for the killing.

Egypt will join observers for self-rule vote

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt will send a mission to help oversee Palestinian self-rule elections set for Jan. 20, Foreign Minister Amr Musa said on Monday. "Egypt will join the international observers from Arab and European countries in these elections," Mr. Musa said, cited by the government daily Al-Ahram. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are to go to the polls in January for the first time to elect an 83-member self-rule council. Egypt held legislative elections last week in a vote which opposition and rights groups said were rife with massive fraud. The opposition, all but eliminated in the vote, has called for new elections under international supervision.

Syrian Brotherhood leader returns home

DAMASCUS (AFP) — A former secretary general of the banned Muslim Brotherhood has returned home under an amnesty after 13 years of exile, Syrian officials said Sunday. Abdul Fattah Abu Ghadda was allowed back at his request, after having taken refuge in Europe following the bloodbath in the northern town of Hama when the authorities crushed a February 1982 uprising by the fundamentalist Brotherhood. He took refuge in Germany and Britain. The officials, confirming a report from Amnesty International, said around 1,200 political prisoners were freed under an amnesty to mark the 25th anniversary of President Hafez Al Assad's rise to power on Nov. 16. Most of those released last month were Muslim Brotherhood members, along with communists. But a communist leader jailed in 1983, Riad Al Turk, stayed behind bars.

Cyprus court to admit Briton's confession

LARNACA (R) — A court in Cyprus ruled on Monday that a document prosecution lawyers say is a confession by a British soldier to the murder of a Danish tour guide can be read out in court. Judge Takis Eliades overruled defence objections on the admissibility of a statement written by a British soldier, 27, who faces abduction and manslaughter charges for the death of Louise Jensen, 23. "We did not detect any circumstances tantamount to oppression of the accused (when writing the statement)," said Assizes Court President Takis Eliades. "Subsequently objections are rejected... the statement is admissible. Prosecutors say the document is a confession written two days after Ford and army friends Justin Fowler, 27, and Jeff Pennell, 23, were arrested in connection with the woman's disappearance at the resort of Ayia Napa in September 1994. The case, which has shocked Cyprus where such incidents are rare, has taken months to get going as defence and prosecution sparred over the one procedural issue after another.

New editor-in-chief for Chicago Sun-Times

CHICAGO (R) — Nigel Wade, foreign affairs editor for Britain's Daily Telegraph since 1986, was named editor-in-chief of the Chicago Sun-Times on Monday. The 49-year-old Australian, a former Nieman fellow, has worked in the Daily Telegraph's Washington bureau, was the paper's bureau chief in Beijing from 1976 to 1980 and later headed its Moscow bureau for four years. The Sun-Times and the Daily Telegraph are among 137 papers worldwide owned by Conrad Black's Hollinger International Inc.

Hashd taken to court

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Interior is suing the Jordan People's Democratic Party, a leftist group, on charges of having financial, ideological and administrative links with a foreign group.

The charge is based on interviews some of party's members gave to the press asserting that the party, known as Hashd, maintains links with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) led by Nayef Hawatme and based in Syria.

Salem Nahbas, Hashd's secretary general, will appear in court on Thursday. In a telephone interview with the Jordan Times, Mr. Nahbas denied the charge but made no further comment.

The Political Parties Law, enacted in 1992, stipulates that Jordanian parties should not have any links with outside parties.

The charge against the party is believed to be based on complaints aired by party members in interviews carried by Al-Rai and Al-Dustour about the party's alleged links with the DFLP.

Several members resigned from the party this year, including its secretary general, Tayseer Zibri, and Bassam Haddadin, a member of the Lower House of Parliament.

Mr. Zibri and Mr. Haddadin have cited what they described as the lack of party's independence as the main reason for their resignation.

Opposition parties will hold a press conference today to comment on the case against Hashd.

Saudis are Gulf's 'big brother' — newspaper

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia is the Gulf's "big brother" because of the sacrifices it has made in defending the region, a newspaper said Monday after Qatar threatened to boycott the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

"Saudi Arabia will remain the big brother of the GCC countries, with the consent of all the people in the region," Al-Yom said.

In an implicit reference to Qatar, it said: "Some Gulf countries, which do not assume the responsibilities of the big Saudi brother, could not appreciate the sacrifices made by Saudi Arabia."

"Saudi Arabia made sacrifices to defend the interests of the Gulf Arab region with all political, economic and even military means," the newspaper said.

Al-Yom cited "Saudi Arabia's great role in the liberation of Kuwait" from Iraqi occupation in February 1991 and "in the Iraq-Iran war" from 1980-1988.

Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Ben Jabr Al Thani said Saturday that his country would boycott GCC meetings as long as a Saudi retained his new post as GCC secretary general.

Last Wednesday the emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, walked out of the final session of the GCC summit to protest the appointment which was made despite

opposition from Qatar, which had advanced its own candidate.

The GCC is made up of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

Iran assailed

Three strategic Gulf islands will remain Arab "despite Iranian arrogance," a Saudi newspaper vowed Monday after Iran said it was prepared to fight an 80-year war to defend them.

"The Iranian official's remarks reveal Tehran's hegemonic aims," according to the Al-Nadwa newspaper, which usually reflects the official view here.

The Iranian navy's deputy commander Rear Admiral Abbas Mohtaj, told the weekly Kayhan Havai published Sunday in Tehran that Iran was "ready for an 80-year war to defend its islands in the Gulf."

But the Saudi newspaper replied: "These islands will remain Arab despite Iranian arrogance."

It denounced "the stubbornness and threats of war made by Tehran in a bid to continue its occupation of the Arab islands."

Adm. Mohtaj said he saw no immediate risk of war over the islands, adding the Gulf Arab countries were small and weak and neither the United States nor Iran wanted a war.

Egypt poll violence deaths raised to 51

CAIRO (AFP) — A total of 51 people were killed and 878 injured during Egyptian parliamentary elections and in protests afterwards, an Egyptian human rights group said on Monday.

The Centre for Human Rights Legal Aid (CHRLA) also condemned widespread fraud by police and the state during the two rounds of voting, saying it meant "the destruction of the democratic system" in a report received by AFP.

The CHRLA set the number killed in the two rounds of voting, completed on Wednesday, at 51 along with 878 injured, many as police broke up demonstrations protesting vote rigging by the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP).

At least 28 of the injured were police, the report added.

"This is the first time parliamentary elections have seen this number of killed and injured," the CHRLA said.

The two bloodiest clashes came in the Delta towns of Qilin and Desouq, where seven and five people were killed respectively when police put down protests against victories by NDP candidates, the CHRLA said.

Opposition and rights groups have called for a new election, blaming fraud for the crushing victory of the

NDP, which won 416 out of 444 seats in parliament.

The opposition took only 14 seats, including one for the Muslim Brotherhood, while the remainder went to independents.

The CHRLA called the NDP majority "illogical," saying the results "reflect the government's refusal of the principle of peaceful disagreement with it and of the people's right to remove the standing government."

The group called for a new law giving the supreme court the right to decide appeals against election results, since legal scholars now generally put that right in the hands of parliament itself.

The supreme administrative court is to rule on Dec. 18 on whether to cancel results in a quarter of parliament's seats due to election fraud.

But the court is expected to back parliament's right to decide its own election results.

"A parliament which has such a sweeping majority of the ruling party cannot be expected to decide on the legitimacy of its members in an independent and impartial way," the CHRLA said.

President Hosni Mubarak meanwhile named six Coptic Christians to the new parliament on Monday after their community failed to win a seat in general elections, the official news agency MENA said.

COLUMN

Soviet satellite burns in Earth's atmosphere

MOSCOW (R) — Fragments of an old Soviet satellite may have plunged into the Pacific Ocean southeast of Hawaii

Sunday after the Kosmos-398 craft burned up on re-entering the atmosphere, ITAR-TASS news agency reported. The agency said the two-tonne research craft, launched nearly 25 years ago, penetrated the atmosphere at 11.09 p.m. Moscow time Sunday (2009 GMT) and was destroyed by the heat. "It is possible certain small-sized elements of the device reached the surface of the ocean southeast of the Hawaiian Islands at 11.15 p.m.," TASS said. It did not say how far from the U.S. island state the fragments might have been.

Russian military space forces had said last week some fragments weighing more than 200 kilograms might reach the Earth's surface although its main bulk would burn up. Some parts of the satellite's engine and oxygen containers, made of metal capable of withstanding high temperatures, had been expected to come down. Kosmos-398 was launched in February, 1971, from Baikonur Cosmodrome carrying the prototype of an engine which Soviet scientists hoped would be able to fire a rocket to the moon. The craft was four days in Earth orbit and then, when tests were completed, it was moved into an outer orbit as space junk. It had been edging gradually closer to re-entry ever since.

Amateur finds planet with garden telescope

LONDON (R) — An amateur astronomer in Britain has discovered a tiny planet 400 million miles (645 million kilometres) from Earth with a telescope rigged up in his garden shed. "I've been stargazing since I was 11 years old but I never thought anything like this would happen to me," George Salit said after the discovery of Salit One was verified by experts at Harvard University and the Smithsonian Institution in the United States. It is one of several thousand minor planets in the solar system. Mr. Salit, 43, found the 20-mile (32-kilometre) diameter planet between Mars and Jupiter quite by chance when scouring the universe. At first he thought it might have been a scratch on his lens, he told the Times newspaper. He thanked his wife Jennifer who constantly brings him cups of tea in his shed. He said: "When I told her, I'd found a new planet, she said: 'That's nice dear'."

Filipino Police nab suspect in death of Japanese

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AFP) — A suspected pimp is facing murder charges for the fatal stabbing of a 57-year old Japanese man in this southern Philippine city, police said Monday. Gilbert Sakalian, who had long eluded police since the Sept. 17 slaying of Keijiro Akimoto, 57, of Yokosuka, was caught by police in his hideout in Santa Catalina village late Saturday. Superintendent Demetrio Maylas of the Zamboanga City Police said. Mr. Maylas said Mr. Sakalian, an alleged pimp, was positively identified by four other suspects who were earlier arrested a few days after Akimoto's killing. Among the four were two alleged prostitutes who were last seen with Akimoto before his death. Mr. Maylas added.

Rabin assassin's benefactor reportedly broke

The Jerusalem Post

SENSATIONAL REPORTS of a mystery Canadian bank-rolling the defence of Yigal Amir were somewhat deflated over the weekend, as the man — a former Toronto dentist — was described as a "lost soul" under psychiatric care.

Friends and family have told Toronto media that the story is a figment of the man's fanciful, some say twisted imagination.

"He is not a well man," his wife was quoted as saying.

Quoting sources in Toronto's Jewish community, the Toronto Sun reported that the man is under psychiatric care and could not afford to

underwrite Amir's defence.

"He has a mental illness," a family friend told another Toronto newspaper.

"He is a person who would say tomorrow that he's meeting with President Clinton or that the (billionaire developer) Reichman never make a move without him."

"The story about him is ridiculous," he said. "He made some comments to someone who works for TV, and that's how the story got started."

Despite the fact that Israeli media named the man, no Canadian media did.

But his name was on the lips of just about everyone in the Jewish community, despite the fact that few people

had heard of him before.

Earlier in the week, reporters braved subzero temperatures by parking themselves outside what was believed to be the man's home in the Toronto suburb of North York.

But neighbours say the former dentist visits only periodically and hasn't lived at the address for years.

There was no answer at the home, and messages were not returned.

Israeli TV reported that the man, initially described as one of the richest Jews in Canada, has been using the home as a base for his fundraising, and that he has transferred money to the Amir family. But here, there

was every indication the man had little, if any, money to send.

He may have been wealthy at one point, but friends and family say the man left his dental practice and went into real estate, including the partial purchase of a Jerusalem hotel.

But he reportedly lost everything when the Canadian real estate market crashed in the late 1980s and became delusional.

"The individual represents no one, and we are surprised that any credibility is being ascribed to these fanciful claims," said Manuel Putsch, director of the Canadian Jewish Congress's Ontario region. "It is hard to conceive

of anyone associating themselves with such an endeavour."

There was no confirmation here of whether the man's son served in the same army unit as Amir, or whether the son went to yeshiva with him.

A report in last Sunday's Toronto Sun said the man tried to hire a lawyer in Israel a week after Yitzhak Rabin's murder.

But Tel Aviv lawyer David Heimovitz reportedly turned the man down, saying he did not have the time to get involved in the case.

Heimovitz said the Toronto man claimed to have been authorised by Amir's parents to find a suitable lawyer, after they rejected a court-appointed lawyer.